NEW LOOK!

GTA: SA GUIDE
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RESIDENT EVIL 4
Scariest game we've ever seen!

TIMESPLITTERS
Future Perfect - hands-on verdict!

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GAMES MASTER

Feb 2005 Issue 156
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...BUT IT'S JUST AS FUN WITH ONE
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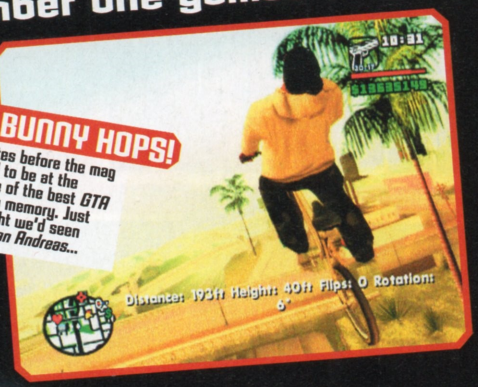
BEST BITS!

The stand out stuff this month on the UK's number one games mag!

p100

100FT BUNNY HOPS!

Arriving minutes before the mag was supposed to be at the printers - some of the best *GTA* cheats in living memory. Just when we thought we'd seen everything in *San Andreas*...



p44

POWERING UP PSP!

We can't remember anything like it. Cynical games journos were reduced to smiling simpletons within pico-seconds of seeing the PSP's huge screen in action!

WELCOME TO GAMESMASTER

Words are great. We're all big fans of them here at *GM*. (Apart from our Arty people, who are happier with their crayons.) My personal favourite has to be 'elbow', or maybe 'espionage'. Unfortunately, some words aren't so slinky on the tongue. Like 'multi-format'. Multi-format is basically a clunky but conveniently short way of saying we cover games whatever machine you play 'em on.

This issue is a great example. Do I keep playing *Ridge Racers* on our fresh-from-Japan PSP, or do I watch Dave getting his head chainsawed not-that-clean off again in a nearly-finished copy of *Resi 4* on the GameCube? It's not a dilemma facing single-format mags. Where as they have to make do with just one console's selection of stuff, we can show and tell you about the best and most exciting games, whatever machine they're on. It's by far the most sensible way of doing things.

Desk tidiness update: it's still pretty bad, but I've managed to shift the pile of vintage games mag underneath where no one will ever find them.

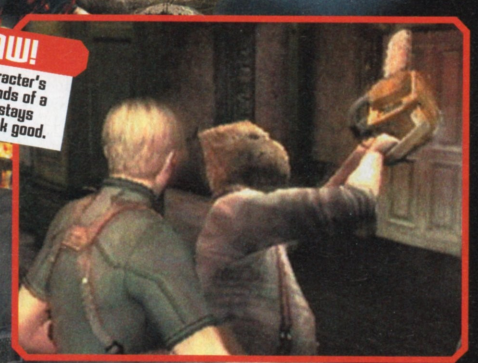
Enjoy your *GM*!

Robin
The Editor

p20

RESI'S CHAINSAW!

It's not right. But losing your character's head at the chainsaw wielding hands of a bloke with a bag over his face? It stays with you. Suddenly, polo necks look good.



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We spy on the latest Sam Fisher outing for your eyes only.

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We review one of the first gleaming PSPs out of Japan.

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Activision's explosive war game reviewed.

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TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

Can EA pull off the perfect sequel..?

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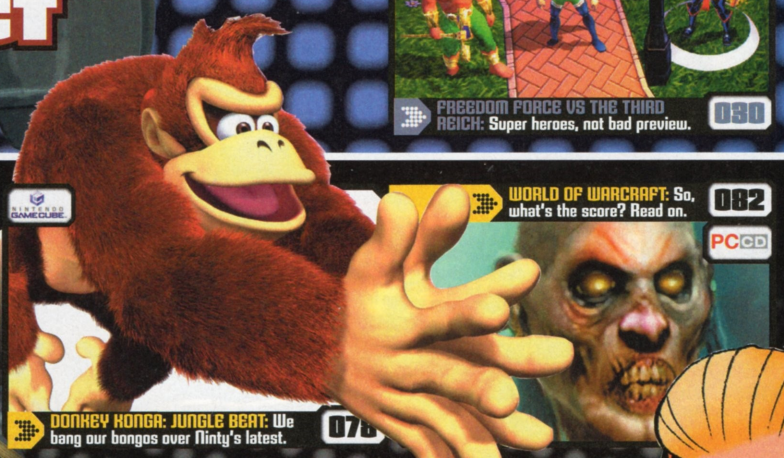

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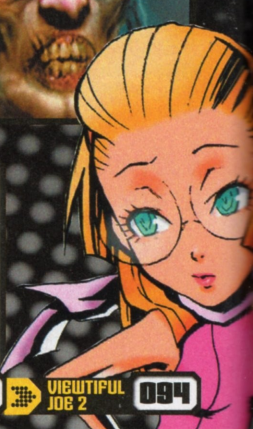

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TEAM GM

They play games for a living... and can't you just tell?

ALI

DEPUTY ART EDITOR
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Super Monkey Ball
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To buy a new Christmas jumper.

"I'd love a house like Hugh Hefner's one day, but working on *GM* just doesn't pay well enough. Yep, you could say that money's too tight too mansion! Badum-tish!"

KATH

REVIEWS ED
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Ico
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To spend less money on trainers.

Kath's distraught this month, after jamming ice-cream into her PSP. She mistakenly thought the new *Boktai* game was Solero-powered...

ROBIN

EDITOR
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
A new *Resident Evil*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To invent a foolproof ironing machine.

What would you do if you could travel through time like in *Splitters*, Rob? "I'd go back and invent *Harry Potter* first." Ah, that's very clev... "Then I'd kill J.K. Rowling with a sniper rifle." Golly.

JULIA

PRODUCTION EDITOR
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Mashed
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To join a casino.

When we asked Julia if she had a PSP, she started trying to guess which number we were thinking of, and drew a picture of a tractor. Not ESP, Jules - jeez.

ROB

STAFF WRITER
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Halo 2
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To give my car its first wash.

New bloke Rob was so excited to hear that he'd got a job on *GamesMaster*, that he swerved his car into a tree. Yes, he quite literally "careered" off the road! (Note: this didn't really happen. Rob's a very responsible driver.)

DAVE

DEPUTY EDITOR
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Kengo 3
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To be more decisive. Maybe.

"Phew! I finally got to Area 69 in *San Andreas* and discovered something very interesting." Extra terrestrial? "Nope, it's just the way my trousers hang."

STEVE

When Steve heard about *Metal Gear Acid*, he spent half an hour ranting wildly about the possibilities of a stealth game set in '80s rave culture. "Big fish, little fish - wait for it - cardboard box!" he babbled, incoherently.

IAN

ART EDITOR
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
Rumble Roses
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To eat more. And drink more.

"I'm not worried about the PSP's power shortages - I've been battery farming. I've planted about half a dozen so far." Ever Ready? "Yes, I'm expecting them to sprout early next spring."

JOEL

REVIEWS + PREVIEWS
GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
An adaptation of my first book, *Going Out With A Bang* (out 18th February).
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To sell loads of copies of my second book, *They Think It's All Uber*, available in all good shops.

Joel's spent the last four weeks Thai boxing. Next month, the nice people at Moss Bros have promised he can move onto beating up dress shirts.

REVIEWS + PSP FEATURE

GAME I'D MOST LIKE TO SEE ON PSP:
A new *GTA:London*
NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:
To stop being Welsh

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ON XBOX AND XBOX LIVE FROM FEB 18

100% NEW!

It's a vicious pack of truth! Down right dirty honesty! And everything you need to know about the month in games!

Club Football series suspended by Codemasters

Gary Dunn, Codemasters' development director lamented: "It's an extremely competitive market sector, and we are taking time out to re-assess our strategy in the football action genre." To be fair, *Club Footy* wasn't really up to the challenge of tackling genre big boys *Pro Evo* and *FIFA*. Instead, Codemasters will sink more manpower into their promising *LMA* management game franchise.

PSP - IT'S HERE!

Launch day mania hits Japan! Plus PSP problems?

The PSP has finally hit the Land of the Rising Sun. The much-heralded 12th December Japanese launch of the PlayStation Portable has finally been and gone, with typically enthusiastic fans queuing through the night, and several Tokyo retailers reporting that they'd run out of the 200,000 stock originally allocated.

First impressions of the machine were generally glowing, with satisfied punters especially excited about the console's amazing visual clarity, a screen big enough to see from outer space, mouth-watering state-of-the-art graphics and sound quality that'd make even the most cynical audiophile weep with pure joy.

Right – enough about those lucky Japanese. The big question is: when can we actually get our hands on a PSP in the UK? Sony reckons it'll be available by 31st March, but in the meantime they've whetted our appetites by announcing the games line-up for the European launch. Find out everything you need to know in our special, starting on p.44.

FIRST REPORTS OF PSP PROBLEMS

However, not all PSP news is good news. Some new owners of brand spanking new PSPs were soon lamenting some decidedly dodgy loading times, UMDs popping out mid-game and battery life that would have the Duracell Bunny hopping mad. Scoot on over to *GamesMaster* Says for our low-down on these and other reported issues with the PSP that are causing something of a storm on the internet. We're not getting our knickers in too much of a twist though, since a few teething problems were only to be expected. See our eight page PSP review starting on page 44 for full details.

GTA PSP BOUND?

Perhaps the most intriguing thing to come out of Rockstar this month is the revelation hidden amongst Take-Two Interactive's financial report that: "Additional products planned for fiscal 2005 from Rockstar include titles based on two of Rockstar's premier brands for Sony's highly anticipated PlayStation Portable platform".

We're not sure exactly what this tricky piece of wordplay means, but the possibilities seem pant-wettingly endless. *Max Payne*, *Red Dead Revolver*, *Midnight Club* or perhaps even *GTA* on the move? Mind you, we're not exactly sure how a massive game like *San Andreas* could actually fit on one of those ickle UMD thingies, but if anyone can do it, Rockstar and Sony can. Stay tuned as this story looks as if it might be massive.

BREAKING NEWS EA HAVE BOUGHT 20% OF PUBLISHER UBISOFT AT A REPORTED COST OF BETWEEN $85 MILLION

Separating the idle gossip from the pro-active stuff.

RUMOUR 1:
"GTA 4 will be set in Europe"

WHERE RUMOURED?
MCV – videogame trend magazine.

GM VERDICT 50% TRUE

There's been a *GTA* London expansion pack – no doubt Rockstar will do something new for *GTA* 4.

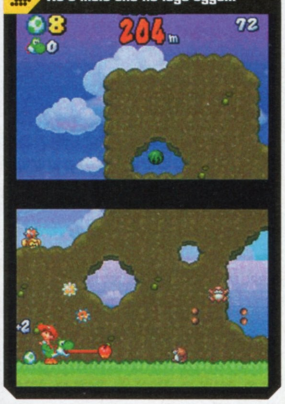
RUMOUR 2:
"TellTale to make Monkey Island 5"

WHERE RUMOURED?
The internet

GM VERDICT 32% TRUE

It's unlikely LucasArts would sell their most successful licence off. Dammit.

He's male and he lays eggs...



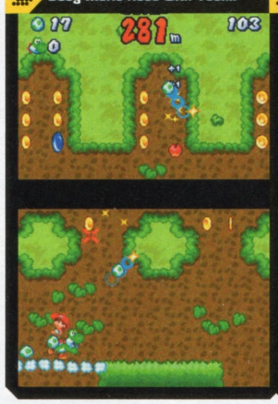
IWATA FIGHT!

Ninty chief has pop at Sony

In an amusing case of handbags at dawn, Nintendo supremo Satoru Iwata has laid into arch rivals Sony. He claims their device reflects the games industry's obsession with technical specs and fancy visuals, rather than products that actually innovate. "PSP has been created with the assumption that the golden success formula is still working," Iwata ranted. "We don't believe that. We're making every effort so that people will say we were right." Tough talk indeed.

The man might have a point, and will no doubt be chuffed that the Big N have shipped an extra 400,000 units of the DS to Japan and North America to meet the festive demand. More than 1.2 million units of the new handheld have flown off the shelves already! More good news for Nintendo has arrived in the shape of new *Yoshi's Touch & Go* screens, a title that looks similar to classic SNES title *Yoshi's Island* but makes use of the DS's touch screen.

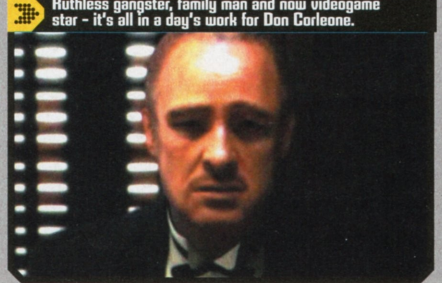
Baby Mario rides with Yoshi.



The cartoon

RESPECT EA, RESPECT THE FAM

Ruthless gangster, family man and now videogame star – it's all in a day's work for Don Corleone.



Godfather trailer debuts on Web

Marlon Brando may have sadly shuffled off this mortal coil, but thanks to kings of the franchise EA, his spirit lives on. For those of you not old enough to remember just quite how great these flicks were, go buy the trilogy on DVD as fast as your legs can carry you. At this stage in proceedings, all EA have seen fit to release is a small teaser video, with *GM*'s favourite gangster Don Corleone reciting his famous speech from the movie and – quite frankly – sounding as if he's got a roll of toilet paper stuffed in his cakehole. With any luck, EA with treat the *Godfather* licence with a little more respect than Bond's last outing in *GoldenEye: Rogue Agent*, or someone at the company might just wake up to find a bloody great severed horse's head between their sheets. EA – you have been warned.

EA snag half-decade NFL exclusivity deal

EA recently announced that they'd agreed a five-year contract with the NFL and NFL Players Inc, guaranteeing the hegemonic publisher sole coverage rights for all of the teams, players, and stadiums. The move will doubtless have a major effect upon the American footy market, with market competitors Sega and Take-Two said to be seething at the news. And rightly so - this is almost as bad as Sky pinching the cricket from terrestrial TV!

The good doctor set for videogame comeback

And that's basically all we've heard. IR Gurus Interactive Australia appear to have landed the gig to develop a PC version of the classic sci-fi TV series *Dr. Who*, although whether the technology yet exists to accurately render Tom Baker's Technicolor scarf in 3D remains to be seen...

HERE'S THE FULL LINE-UP, SO FEAST YOUR EYES ON THESE BABIES...

This lot are also the subject of a monster-sized feature starting on page 46, but for the mo here's a brief gander at the full Euro line-up, so feast your eyes on these babies... Alongside SCEE London's take on the beautiful game, currently just known as Football, this is what you can look forward to playing...

GTA ON PSP? PRAY!
GTA on the PSP could look almost as good as this mock-up.

APE ACADEMY

44 insane mini-games featuring the Ape Escape simians.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

Cutesy golf. This looks a lot like the PS2 version.

FIRED UP

Look out for this eight player vehicle-based shooter.

FORMULA ONE

Official F1 on the move. Yet another compelling PSP racer.

MEDIEVIL

Sir Daniel Fortesque missed out PS2 but bounces back on PSP.

RIDGE RACER

As much of a graphical showcase as a fast-paced arcade racer.

WIPEOUT PURE

Very similar in look and feel to WipEout 2097; a good thing.

WRC

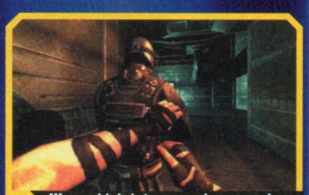
Rallying PSP style. Reflections on the cars show off the PSP's power.

UNSUNG HERO OF THE MONTH!

We sneak into offices to reveal gaming stars

NAME: Gustaf Grefberg
JOB TITLE: Lead Sound Designer at Starbreeze

Gustaf brought you the meaty effects in *Chronicles of Riddick: Butcher Bay*. And they really are meaty...



We couldn't bring ourselves to ask Gustaf about the neck-snapping...

How did you get your job?

I've been with Starbreeze since before it was Starbreeze – when we were just a group of friends who loved games. I didn't have any formal sound training, but sound has been my passion since I was a little kid. I drove my parents mad banging on stuff all the time.

What's the secret to Riddick's sound?

A lot of the really violent punches and body falls came straight from the movie. But we combined them with our own sounds, which we created by making special props.

What kind of props?

Like a metal keyring hitting a plastic tobacco box - that's a guard's armour. And when you drill through the wall in the Equipment Center, that's a hand drill with chains wrapped around it, burrowing into a box full of gravel and bathroom tiles. We recorded real sounds outside, too.

That must have meant you getting some funny looks.

I had a policeman checking me out when I was pointing this huge microphone at a kids' carousel, to get an engine noise for *Riddick*. But when he found out what I was doing he was fascinated.

What about the punching and knifing sounds?

The best way to get a good hard punch is to just whack an object like a melon or piece of meat. A big, raw steak is good. You just have to spend an hour cleaning after you're done.

How do you feel having brought happiness to so many people?

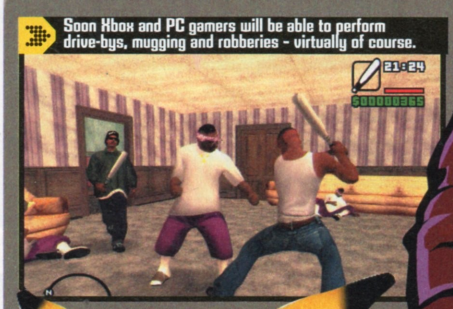
It feels extremely good. *Riddick*'s success was a big relief. I absolutely loved to hear that people were playing the game and getting so much out of it.

TELL US YOUR UNSUNG HERO!
Do you have an Unsung Hero? Nominate a coder who's done something cool in a game and send it to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk or to Unsung Hero at the usual address.

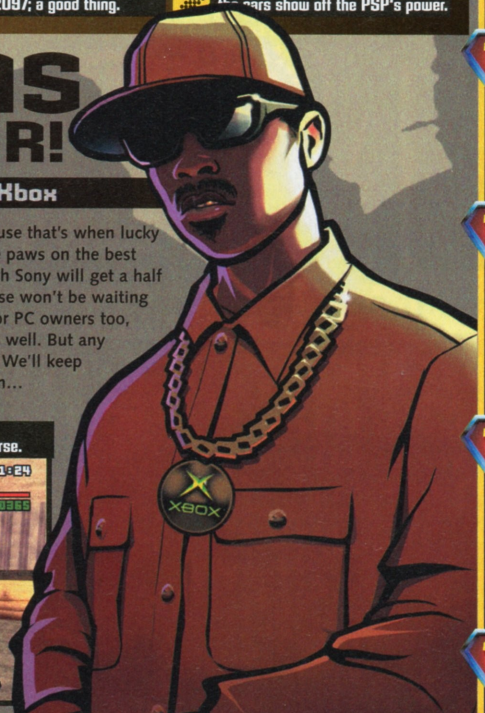
CJ TURNS PS2 TRAITOR!

GTA heads for PC and Xbox

10th June – remember that date, because that's when lucky European Xbox gamers will get their grubby little paws on the best PS2 game of all time, *GTA: San Andreas*. Although Sony will get a half year's head start on their bitter rivals everyone else won't be waiting as long as you might have though. Good news for PC owners too, since *San Andreas* is coming to their machines as well. But any added online features have yet to be announced. We'll keep you informed and bring you the first screens soon...



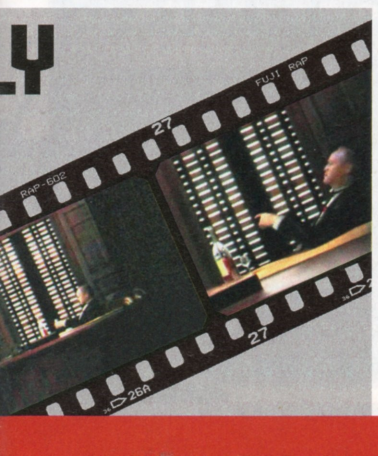
Soon Xbox and PC gamers will be able to perform drive-bys, mugging and robberies - virtually of course.



$100 MILLION

s are ace.

Yoshi faces old and new enemies.



PIKACHU! BLESS YOU!

Pokémon RPG in offing

The latest issue of seminal gaming text Famitsu contains some grabs from an unannounced *Pokémon* RPG in development for GameCube and due for release sometime in 2005. Unfortunately, Ninty aren't exactly giving much away, and haven't provided any official info as of yet. Going from the screens, it looks as if the game will be a cutesy 3D RPG (duh) which will probably build on the RPG bits of last year's Pokémon Colosseum. More details when we get them.

100% NEW!

STALKER release date plunged into chaos

It may well be the most hyped first person shooter since *Half Life-2*, but rumours circulating around the internet are suggesting that S.T.A.L.K.E.R is also suffering from the same kind of setbacks that infamously plagued Valve's opus. It's only been a few weeks since THQ announced a five-month delay to the title, but despite THQ denying that something is afoot, the rumours just won't go away. *GM* has heard horror stories of missing cutscenes, unfinished missions and more bugs than you'd find in Dave's hair. The release date is May this year they say, but don't hold your breath.

NEW STUFF

WILLIAMS F1 TEAM 'FORCE FEEDBACK' RACING WHEEL

An exact replica of Juan Pablo Montoya's wheel this works with both Force Feedback and Dual Vibration games, lets you adjust sensitivity and feedback and has pivoted pedals. Only the churlish could ask for more, particularly given the £60 price. You can even detach the wheel to show off the digital display.

FROM: JOYTECH
CONTACT: www.joytech.net
PRICE: £59.99

RESI 4 CHAINSAW CONTROLLER

More bonkers is NubyTech's blood splattered *Resident Evil 4* chainsaw controller. In partnership with Capcom, these guys have pulled out all the stops – it'll no doubt muster fear and respect at the same time, whilst remaining light and ergonomic. We'll tell you how well it works with the game next month!

FROM: NubyTech
CONTACT: www.lik-sang.com
PRICE: Around £30

MYSTIC GM

What's going to be happening in 2005?

So you thought 2004 was full of excitement, what with the long awaited release of *San Andreas*, not to mention *Halo 2* and *Half-Life 2*. But 2005 is shaping up to be even more exciting. But instead of great games, it'll have great new consoles. The Nintendo DS and Sony PSP are both expected to be released mid-March, while the next generation of home consoles could all be out – in America at least – by Christmas. At the very least we should get to see one or some of them at E3 in May, and we can't wait.

Events to mark in your gaming diary!

5th Bill Gates could by now have unveiled the Xbox 2 at the CES event in Las Vegas. It's the same event the Xbox was shown for the first time in 2001. By mid-January Force 4 motherboards are due out.

18th This is the Nintendo DS's rumoured release date in the UK. It's expected to cost around £129.99 and launch with around 25 games, including Activision's *Spider-Man* and *Super Mario 64* DS. On 25th March, Sony's PSP is rumoured to be coming out, just a week after the DS in the UK. The price should be between £150 and £200. More details next ish.

18th The annual games trade show, E3, should be a corker this year, with the likelihood that all three next generation home consoles - Xbox 2, PS3 and Nintendo's Revolution - will be shown.

Insiders have hinted the Xbox 2 and Nintendo Revolution will be released, in North America at least, before Christmas. The PS3 is expected to be released around six months later. None of these dates have been confirmed by their retrospective companies, and there's no word on the UK releases.

JANUARY | MARCH | MAY | DECEMBER

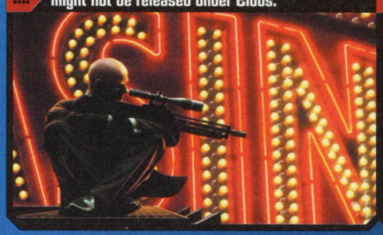
RUMOUR SPECIAL - THINGS THAT 'COULD' HAPPEN IN 2005

EIDOS WILL BE BOUGHT OUT BY A RIVAL PUBLISHER ANY DAY NOW
It's been fairly common knowledge for the past few months that UK publishers Eidos have been looking for a buyer. Rumoured companies interested include super software publisher EA. Which could be good news for the next *Tomb Raider* and ensure other Eidos franchises like *Hitman* have plenty of cash spent on them.

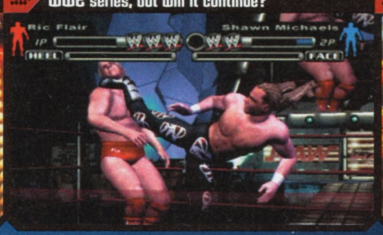
THQ MIGHT NOT MAKE FUTURE WWE GAMES
Lots of boring court action is about to kick off between THQ and the WWE and the end result could be that THQ lose the WWE licence. Which could mean EA or Activision snapping up the rights and completely changing the series. Potentially bad news for THQ. And a period of uncertainty for 'rassling fans as we play a waiting game to see who gets their hands on WWE.

ODDWORLD INHABITANTS WILL RELEASE CITIZEN SIEGE - THE GAME EQUIVALENT OF A MICHAEL MOORE BOOK
After *Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath*, *Oddworld* Inhabitants are set to release a politically 'controversial' game. *Oddworld* creator Lorne Lanning says: 'there'll be quite a few senators and congressmen who'll be really pissed off'. Brilliant.

Agent 47 sits and awaits his fate. He might not be released under Eidos.



THQ have done an ass-kicking job of the WWE series, but will it continue?



Expect a politically controversial game from *Oddworld* in 2005.

BREAKING NEWS PARAMOUNT ARE SET TO MAKE A FILM BASED ON SPLINTER CELL, DIRECTED BY PETER BERG

PLAYSTATION TURNS 10!

Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you (etc.)

Sony's grey box of tricks swept into the world of gaming in 1995, and signalled the forging of what was to become an imperious empire. Industry stalwarts Sega and Nintendo's pretenders to the throne – Saturn, N64 and Dreamcast – were each dismissed, cruelly put to the sword by Sony's baby-faced assassin. A decade on, we salute the PS with a look back at our personal top ten games.

10: *Tomb Raider* – The game that arguably started the 3D revolution, and made a certain Lara Croft the hottest digital commodity on the planet. The days when *Tomb Raider* games were actually good seem so long ago now. Sigh.

9: *WipEout* – Not quite as good as the Bob Monkhouse quiz show of the same name, but the most innovative, adrenaline-pumping racer to come along in years. Did for game soundtracks what Eva Herzigova did for bra sales.

8: *ISS Pro Evolution* – Descendent of the *Pro Evo* series, and still arguably the most playable of the lot.

7: *Silent Hill* – Overshadowed by *Resi*'s schlock horror, but swapped the jumpy stuff for more psychological fare. And those demon babies still make us scream inside…

6: *FF7* – Brought RPGs into the 20th century, with the perfect combination of looks, sounds and gameplay. We wept when Sephiroth murdered poor Aerith and Cloud's heart was broken.

5: *Gran Turismo* – Upped the benchmark for racing games. Never before were you able to tweak your rides so comprehensively, making this the ultimate driving experience at the time.

4: *Einhander* – Overlooked by many gamers, despite the high marks awarded it by many a drooling journalist. Integrated 3D into the gameplay in a way never really seen before, plus the innovative weapons system was just too cool.

3: *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night* – Still one of our favourite games of all time, and the jewel in the crown of Konami's much-loved franchise. Who said the PS couldn't do 2D?

2: *Resident Evil 2* – The best entry in the series? The first time we saw a Licker, a puddle of something quite unnameable appeared between our legs.

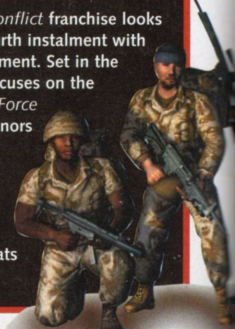
1: *Metal Gear Solid* – The first truly cinematic videogame. *MGS* was orchestrated with such panache it almost seemed more like an art form than a computer game.

Snipers: always a concern when heading off for a pleasant stroll through war-torn countryside.

LOOK OUT OSAMA!

Conflict on schedule...

The successful *Conflict* franchise looks to be heading towards a fourth instalment with SCi Games recent announcement. Set in the near future, *Global Terror* focuses on the original *Desert Storm Delta Force* veterans Bradley, Foley, Connors and Jones. They have now joined an elite anti-terrorist unit tasked with minimising the worldwide threat from global terrorist. Cue much neutralising of terrorist threats that subtly mirror real life .



The Matrix is everywhere...or not. Matrix online misses Jan release

Not ones to shy away from cutting to the chase, Warner Bros. Interactive Entertainment bluntly said: "The fact of the matter is that the game is not ready, and we want to take a little more time." The eagerly anticipated *MMORPG* was originally on schedule for a 4th February release, until the powers that be decided Morpheus and co. needed a little more polish and pushed the game back to the rather more vague 'Spring 2005' release date instead.

Hoods flee after mistaking GTA for proper cops

Those crazy Americans – don't you just love 'em? ABC has reported that armed burglars attempting to ransack a house in Santa Fe panicked and fled after they mistakenly believed that sound effects emitting from a PS2 were the cries of cops who were onto their nefarious scheme. Apparently, the authentic-sounding line "Stop, we have you surrounded. This is the police." was all it took to make the cowardly crims scarper.

GRAN TURISMO 4

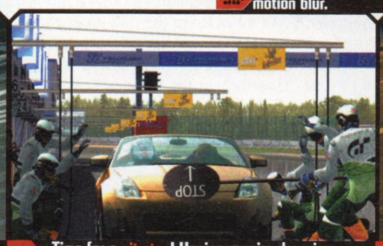
Your last chance to drool...

Presented here for your delectation are a selection of the most jaw-dropping new *GT4* grabs in our archive. No, we don't blame you for thinking you might not be able to wait for a month to get to grips with our massive review of this legendary racer 'cause we feel exactly the same. Test: which grab is taken from real life and not *GT4*?

TVR ahoy! Check out the amazing motion blur.

Saleen around the city in a dream machine.

A Honda NSX Mobile 1 in all its glory. We're loving the razor-sharp graphics.

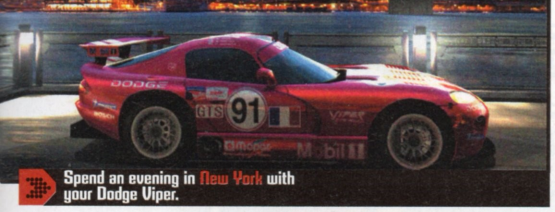


Time for a pit stop! Having repairs done is dull, we want to get back on track...

Ready for Le Mans with the Nissan Calsonic. You can almost smell the anticipation...

Tearing through the countryside in a Mini Cooper is hard to beat.

Chillin' with the classic Alpine 1600s after dark.



Spend an evening in New York with your Dodge Viper.

IT'S DOOM JIM, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

Doom film gets the excuses in early

Dave Callaham, screenwriter of the long-awaited movie adaptation of *Doom*, has warned fans that the *Doom* they see on film might not necessarily be wholly representative of the *Doom* they play on their computers. Currently shooting (quite literally) in Prague, the flick will star Karl Urban (*Lord of the Rings*' Eomer) as space marine John Grimm, battling against the hordes of hell on Mars' moon Phobos. Sounds pretty faithful to us, but it's always a worry when Hollywood starts getting the excuses in almost a year before a film is due for release.

SUPER MARIO Bros: John Leguizamo's career low, and that's saying something.

Resident Evil/RE2: The first was decent, the second just plain sucked. Both bore only tentative resemblances to the *Resi* we all know and love.

TOMB RAIDER/TR2: Even the presence of bee stung-lipped beauty Angela Jolie wasn't enough to save this one from the highest realms of cringe worthiness.

MORTAL KOMBAT/MK2: Techno soundtrack complete with game speech samples aside, these were both true shockers. 'Excellent' they were not...

STREETFIGHTER: This is the worst of a very bad bunch. Not even JCVD could save it.

BAD KARMA FOR LLAMAS EVERYWHERE

Unity project canned

Game industry messiahs Peter Molyneux and Jeff Minter have announced the cancellation of their collaborative project Unity, their super-duper looking psychedelic shooter for GameCube. No outright reason was cited, save that old chestnut of time constraints. Old school purists are unashamedly shedding a tear or two.

Makes Ghost Recon 2 look a bit drab.

Brain hurtingly intense. And it's not even moving.

WHO IS JEFF MINTER?

Llama lover Jeff is one of the last remaining gods of videogaming, known for developing titles possessing a...er...'far out' sense of humour, plus oodles of style and playability. His seminal shooter *Llamatron* (1991) was responsible for popularizing the concept of Shareware, but he was writing games featuring ungulates years previously in games such as *Attack of the Mutant Camels2* (1984) and a host of others. Inspired.

KATAMARI DAMACY SEQUEL ANNOUNCED

The bonkers game returns...

The unarguably odd yet surprisingly fun Namco 'roll over things with your sticky ball and then lob it at enemies' game appears to have made enough of a wave in Japan and the US to earn itself a sequel. Reprising your role as the Prince of All Cosmos, the aim of this bizarre little game is to make the largest katamari possible in a given time limit. Earlier stages see you given the simple task of making katamari about the size of a watermelon, but during later stages you'll eventually roll a katamari that fills the screen! The time: 2005. The place: Japan. The console: PS2. But will it – or indeed its prequel – ever see the light of day here in the UK?

You'll be able to play as multiple characters.

Could this win the award for the oddest game yet?

GAMES MASTER SAYS

PSP PROBLEMS

Sony's dream machine in not quite perfect shocker...

By now you've no doubt have heard all about the PSP – after all, we've spent a massive eight pages this issue lauding Sony's little box of magic.

Our more internet-savvy readers might also have noticed that a number of disturbing reports have been creeping out in Japan since the 14th December launch date, that suggest things aren't all rosy in Sony's garden of love.

We're talking dead pixels, UMD discs that simply slip out of the PSP during play, analogue nubs that fall off, stuck buttons, loading times that make an Atari Lynx look like value for money, and a battery life that'd have the Duracell bunny fainting with shock.

Given the 'net's reputation for hysteria, we're confident that these aren't general manufacturing issues, but rather isolated cases. Anyway, judging by the way the PSP is flying off the shelves in Japan, it looks as if punters have voted with hard cash and given the machine a massive thumbs up. Feedback from the Land of the Rising Sun is glowing, as our PSP news story on page 8 proves.

But there's still more Sony slagging underway. The proprietary UMD format the PSP uses has also come under fire, with many critics wondering how they'll be able to watch movies or play music on the go.

To the Doomsayers *GM* says: SHUT UP! The PSP is a console and, in the final analysis, it'll live or die by its games. Given Sony's reputation, we're 99% sure the PSP will be an absolute worldwide smash.

Trust us, having played our office PSPs to death already, we can tell you that when you switch it on and see that giant screen light up for the first time, you'll know you've got something truly special on your hands. Everybody who has played on it wants one – it's got that iPod cool appeal in spades and draws larger crowds of admiring onlookers. than a tipsy Jordan outside *Stringfellows*. Despite the usual rumour mongering, we truly believe that PSP (and DS) are the future of handheld gaming, and we await their arrival on these shores with bated breath.

Be reassured, people. *GM* is thoroughly excited by the arrival of the PSP, since it and the Nintendo DS look to have pushed portable gaming to that next level.

100% NEW!

Experienced Driver Leaves Atari

Reflections founder Martin Edmondson has quit! The mastermind behind the *Destruction Derby* and *Driver* series of titles has upped sticks and left Atari-owned Reflections after almost 20 years in the cockpit. Edmondson hasn't really offered a reason for leaving, but declared that he remains on excellent terms with his former company, and intends to carry on developing new games in the future. Phew!

Zombie mastermind moves into games

Zombie flick guru George A Romero is getting into games. Hip Interactive have got him onboard and although no games have been officially announced, expect to see classics like *Dawn of the Dead* appear on a console near you very soon.

GAMESMASTER BEST OF YEAR AWARDS 2004

What made you gasp, gawp, laugh, cry and/or faint in 2004?

No sane gamer has been left in any doubt that 2004 has been a year to remember – it's the gaming equivalent of a big chocolate gateau smothered in lovely cream. This year's vote promises to be the most exciting since *GM* was first launched over 150 issues ago! With instant classics like *Halo 2*, *Half-Life 2*, *GTA: San Andreas*, Team *GM* haven't been this happy since Luke Skywalker blew up the Death Star way back in 1977.

So have a gander at our categories and start racking the old grey matter. As well as the more obvious awards, we've also added a couple of slightly more quirky ones to find out just what made you all really tick over these past glorious 12 months.

Remember, *GM*'s awards are the only ones that really matter – just ask Samus Aran who sensationally refused to attend our glittering 2004 bash after *Metroid Prime* came sixth in the Gaming Turkey of the Year award, and Samus herself only scooped #3 in our sexiest character poll. Stroppy cow. Next time we'll invite Ridley and his Space Pirate mates instead. But we digress – on to the important business of voting...

- GAME OF THE YEAR 2004
- BEST PS2 GAME OF 2004
- BEST XBOX GAME OF 2004
- BEST CUBE GAME OF 2004
- BEST PC GAME OF 2004
- BEST MULTI-PLAYER GAME OF 2004
- BEST ONLINE GAME OF 2004
- BEST PIECE OF HARDWARE OF 2004
- BEST VISUALS OF 2004
- SOUNDTRACK OF 2004
- BEST MOVIE TO GAME ADAPTATION
- BEST CHEAT/SECRET OF 2004
- BEST MOVE OF 2004
- HARDEST GAME OF 2004
- SEXIEST GAME CHARACTER OF 2004
- MOST BADASS CHARACTER OF 2004
- BEST HANDHELD GAME OF 2004
- HARDEST BOSS OF 2004
- BEST CELEBRITY GAMING CAMEO
- BARGAIN OF 2004
- BIGGEST 'WOW' MOMENT OF 2004
- BEST IN-GAME INSULT OF 2004
- WORST DEVELOPER OF 2004
- HERO OF THE YEAR
- VILLAIN OF 2004
- THE BAD ACTING AWARD
- WORST HAIR OF 2004
- GAMING TURKEY OF 2004
- GAMING LET-DOWN OF 2004
- MOST ANTICIPATED TITLE OF 2005

WIN!

AN XBOX AND TWO TOP GAMES!

Vote for your favourite games of 2004 and be in with a chance of winning an Xbox complete with Halo 2 and Fable. We're giving them away to one lucky voter.

YOUR DETAILS

NAME .....

AGE .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

PHONE NUMBER ..... EMAIL .....

HOW TO VOTE:

1. Jot down your choices on this here page (or photocopy/rewrite it if you don't want to harm your copy of *GM*) and bung it in the post to GM Awards 2005, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.
2. Head your choices 'GM Reader Awards 2005' and send to: gamesmaster @futurenet.co.uk
Closing date is 28th February 2005

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100% NEW!

Dynasty Warriors 5 on the horizon

Nope – not Blake Carrington and the gang, but Koei's successful action/strategy hybrid is sallying forth for its fifth campaign. March is slated for the PS2 American release, so expect the title to dribble onto the European market sometime after that. A Nintendo DS version is also in the offing, so get sharpening those swords.

Third sequel rumours surface

EA bigwig Mark Skaggs recently thrilled the hordes who subscribe to the C&C email list, by announcing the development of a new title set in the *Red Alert* universe. It's being worked upon by the guys who brought us *Red Alert 2* and *Generals* amongst others, and the prospect of blowing up yet more communists up has Team *GM* rubbing our hands with unbridled glee.

UK Top 20 Games Chart

It's a battle of the Titans for the number one spot this month, but which title's in pole position? Find out...

GM uses the ChartTrack chart – the only chart officially recognised by the UK software industry. Get the full 20 in *GM* every month!

ChartTrack

IT'S THE ONLY CHART THAT COUNTS!

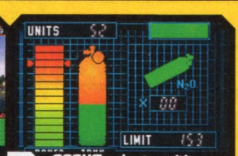
NO.		PREVIOUS POSITIONS: Last week	2 weeks ago	3 weeks ago	GAME	PUBLISHER	GM's SCORE	WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?
1	▲	1	1	2	Need For Speed Underground 2 PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	EA	84%	The ultimate pimp-ass street-ride sim. Loads to do, lovely to look at and great to play. No one does the business quite like *NFSU2*
2	▼	2	2	1	Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas PS2	Take 2	98%	A game of such beauty, ambition, scale, brutal brilliance, and delicate perfection that we must all be humble in its presence.
3	NEW	6	·	·	Call of Duty: Finest Hour PS2 XBOX CUBE	Activision	81%	Dull at times, but mostly cracking WW2 epic, even for those long bored by 'realistic' war games.
4	▲	4	7	10	The Incredibles PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA	THQ	55%	Good clean fun, but plenty of flaws to spoil the otherwise competent gameplay.
5	▲	8	8	8	FIFA 2005 PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA	EA	81%	It's slick and quick and it's the best *FIFA* for years, but a few things stop it from being more than just the runner up.
6	NEW	10	·	·	Prince of Persia: Warrior Within PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	Ubisoft	89%	A sparkling sequel that still has the same tiny problems, but is still as beautiful to play as it is to watch in motion.
7	NEW	7	11	·	GoldenEye: Rogue Agent PS2 XBOX CUBE	EA	60%	This is the case of an incredibly stupid concept averagely executed. Just who this is supposed to appeal to, we do not know.
8	▼	10	8	7	The Getaway: Black Monday PS2	Sony	71%	Once again *The Getaway* fails to be massively original and it's infuriatingly bad in places. Works only as a no-brainer.
9	▼	8	9	8	Pro Evolution Soccer 4 PS2	Konami	95%	The real footy fans' choice. As a detailed simulation this does for the beautiful game what *Gran Turismo* does for driving.
10	▼	8	6	9	Halo 2 XBOX	Microsoft	95%	It's easy to nit-pick, but despite a woefully pulpy story, *Halo 2* is a masterly achievement and the best game on Xbox.
11	▼	11	10	8	The Urbz: Sims in the City PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	EA	71%	Extremely silly. Occasionally embarrassing. But a genuine giggle. Won't change your life, but your life was probably fine anyway.
12	▼	8	8	6	WWE Smackdown! Vs Raw PS2	THQ	88%	Technically superior to its predecessor and tighter than a Scotsman's fist, this is the wrestling fan's game of choice.
13	▼	12	14	11	The Simpsons: Hit & Run PS2 XBOX PC	Vivendi	80%	A real surprise and quite a treat. Nicking from *GTA*, this offers freeform driving in a well-evoked *Simpsons* universe.
14	▬	18	18	14	The Sims 2 PC	EA	91%	The perfect sequel to one of the most ingenious games ever. It might be the same old thing, but its got that *Sims* magic.
15	NEW	15	12	·	Killzone PS2	Sony	79%	Packs a punch, but one you'll see coming a mile off. Noisy and straightforwardly satisfying, but maybe too linear for some.
16	▼	20	18	12	Lord of the Rings: The Third Age PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA	EA	78%	A lightweight, easy but solid RPG that has no famous faces, little chance to make choices and hardly any fresh ideas.
17	▼	17	15	15	Sonic Heroes PS2 XBOX	Sega	78%	A teamwork-heavy sprint in the right direction, but offers only charm in place of depth. Easy to like, hard to love.
18	NEW	·	·	·	Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle-Earth PC	EA	79%	A brilliant but rather shallow recreation of one of the finest cinematic battles ever seen.
19	▬	21	22	18	Eye Toy: Play 2 PS2	Sony	84%	*Play 2* takes Eye Toy to a whole new level. It's more than novelty; it has actual longevity. It'll last long past Christmas.
20	▼	16	12	21	Shrek 2 PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA	Activision	68%	There are better platform games that innovate instead of stealing bits from other games, but this is a decent brain-dead activity.

Software charts compiled by ChartTrack, ©2003 ELSPA (UK) Ltd. www.elspa.com Words: Rob Taylor

1 NFS UNDERGROUND 2

All the Christmas big guns – even the seemingly untouchable *GTA: San Andreas* – have been left choking on the exhaust fumes of EA's phenomenally successfully car racer. Question is, will *NFSU* last the distance or can CJ and pals blow them away in time for 25th December?

Burning rubber all the way to the top spot.



NFSU2's chart position doesn't need tuning.

3 CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR

Arguably the most impressive chart performer of the month, surging in at No.3. Meanwhile, lots of you still went out and bought *Goldeneye: Rogue Agent*, despite our own very Bond look-alike Dave warning you off. You silly, silly people.

Call of Duty has been wasting the opposition.

Another chart victory for Activision.

? HALF-LIFE 2

Can it be true? *Half-Life 2*, which has been gradually sliding down the charts, has disappeared from the Top 20 – what gives Mr Freeman? We doubt the G-Man is going to be very happy with the situation, so expect a visit from him very soon...

Will *H-L2* manage to climb the charts again?

Soldiers taking care of more *Halo 2* fanboys.

US CHARTS

GTA sneaks in ahead of *Halo 2* in the bid for Crimbo No. 1.

1. GTA: San Andreas PS2
2. Halo 2 XBOX
3. The Incredibles PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA
4. The Sims 2 PC
5. World of Warcraft PC
6. Madden NFL 2005 PS2 XBOX CUBE PC
7. Mario Party 6 CUBE
8. Zoo Tycoon 2 PC
9. NFSU2 PS2 XBOX CUBE PC
10. Half-Life 2 PC

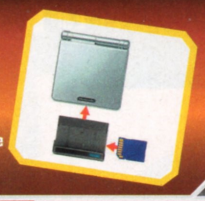
JAPAN CHARTS

Dragon Quest franchise approaches a huge number of sequels...

1. Dragon Quest 8: Sky, Sea, Earth & The Cursed Princess PS2
2. Ratchet & Clank 3: Galactic Star Rangers PS2
3. Momotarou Dentetsu PS2
4. Mario Party 6 CUBE
5. Slotter Up Core 5 Dorat PS2
6. Naruto: Gekitou Ninja Taisen 3 CUBE
7. Dragon Ball: Advance Adventure GBA
8. Mobile Suit Gundam Seed Destiny GBA
9. Kingdom Hearts: Chain of Memories GBA
10. GameBoy Wars Advance 1 & 2 GBA

Nintendo go all multimedia on us...

Nintendo of Japan have recently announced a swanky new official piece of kit that'll let GBA SP owners play music and movies on their handhelds. The cartridge-sized marvel plugs into the game slot on the console, with SD cards containing the data then being plugged into that. There's even a built-in headphone jack! Although it's not exactly going to divert any attention away from the PSP, this handy peripheral is scheduled for a February Japan release at the reasonable price of approximately £25. Question is, will it work with the DS?



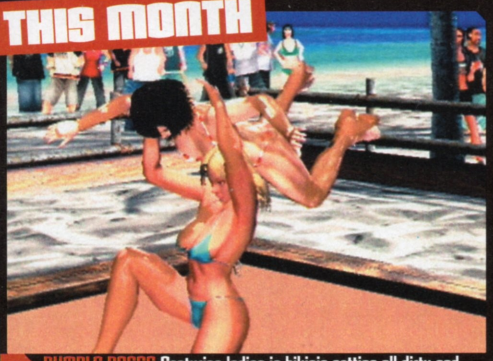
Sports Interactive score Footy Manager own goal

Football Manager 2005 is now banned in China! The game was given the red card after Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Tibet were listed as separate countries in the game, instead of as a part of China. Government officials slated the management sim for compromising the nation's "sovereignty and territorial integrity". Obviously no one at Si has been following *Himalaya* with Michael Palin on the telly recently, otherwise they'd have twigged how seriously the Chinese take their border issues.

WATCH OUT FOR...

Our radar has picked up these imminent beauties...

THIS MONTH



RUMBLE ROSES Featuring ladies in bikinis getting all dirty and slippery, grappling with each other in mud.

NEXT MONTH

THE PUNISHER You can torture people in ways we never even dreamed of – and our minds are up there with the sickest.

3 MONTHS

THE SIMS 2: UNIVERSITY This university add-on of *The Sims 2* lets you take control of your teenage sims as they head off to halls.

THE FUTURE

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA The release date of possibly the best *Zelda* to date still hasn't been revealed. We can't wait.

Cut out and stick in on the wall

2005 CALENDAR

JANUARY

21st	EYETOY CHAT PS2 PS2	Sony
25th	TRINITY XB XBOX	Activision
28th	CLOSE COMBAT: FIRST TO FIGHT XB, PC XBOX PC	Take Two
28th	DELTA FORCE: BLACK HAWK DOWN XB XBOX	NovaLogic
28th	DRAGON BALL Z: BUUS FURY GBA GBA	Atari
28th	ESPN NFL 2K5 XB, PS2 XBOX PS2	Sega
28th	FAHRENHEIT PC PC	Vivendi
28th	BULLETPROOF MONK PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	Empire
28th	IRON PHOENIX XB XBOX	Sega
28th	KING ARTHUR PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	Konami
28th	MECHASSAULT 2: LONE WOLF XB XBOX	Microsoft
28th	MOTO GP 4 PS2 PS2	Sony
28th	NFL STREET 2 PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	EA
28th	OUTLAW GOLF 2 PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Take Two
28th	PROJECT ZERO 2 XB XBOX	Microsoft
28th	RED NINJA: END OF HONOR PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Vivendi
28th	RUMBLE ROSES PS2 PS2	Konami
28th	SCALER XB XBOX	Take Two
28th	SECOND SIGHT PC PC	Codemasters

FEBRUARY

4th	CITY OF HEROES PC PC	Ncsoft
4th	DONKEY KONGA: JUNGLE BEAT GC CUBE	Nintendo
4th	PSI OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY PC PC	Midway
4th	UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004/2005 PS2, XB, GC, PC PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	Take Two
8th	GRAN TURISMO PS2 PS2	Sony
11th	FORGOTTEN REALMS: DEMON STONE XB XBOX	Atari
11th	PLAYBOY: THE MANSION PS2, XB, PC PS2 XBOX PC	Ubisoft
11th	STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC 2: THE SITH LORDS XB, PC XBOX PC	LucasArts
11th	THE SETTLERS: HERITAGE OF KINGS PC PC	Ubisoft
18th	MERCENARIES PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	LucasArts
18th	NBA STREET 3 PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	EA
18th	WORLD OF WARCRAFT PC PC	Vivendi
25th	ADVENTURES OF JIMMY NEUTRON BOY GENIUS: ATTACK OF THE TWONKIES GC, GBA CUBE GBA	THQ
25th	BLOOD WILL TELL PS2 PS2	SEGA
25th	BROTHERS IN ARMS: ROAD TO HILL 30 PS2, XB, PC PS2 XBOX PC	Ubisoft
25th	COLD WINTER PS2 PS2	Vivendi
25th	CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION XB XBOX	
25th	DESTROY ALL HUMANS PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	THQ
25th	FORZA MOTORSPORT XB XBOX	Microsoft
25th	MARIO POWER TENNIS GC CUBE	Nintendo
25th	PREDATOR: CONCRETE JUNGLE PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Vivendi
25th	PRO RUGBY MANAGER 2005 PC PC	Digital Jesters
25th	PROJECT: SNOWBLIND PS2, XB, PC PS2 XBOX PC	Eidos
25th	HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3 PC PC	Sega
25th	PROJECT MINERVA PS2 PS2	Midas
25th	PSYCHONAUTS XB XBOX	Microsoft
25th	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: THE MOVIE GC, GBA CUBE GBA	THQ
25th	STARCRAFT GHOST PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	Vivendi
25th	SAMURAI WARRIORS XTREME LEGENDS PS2 PS2	Koei
27th	THE PUNISHER PS2, XB, PC PS2 XBOX PC	THQ
TBC	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP 2: THE LIANDRI CONFLICT XB XBOX	Midway
TBC	DEATH BY DEGREES PS2 PS2	Sony
TBC	IMMORTAL CITIES: CHILDREN OF THE NILE PS2 PS2	SEGA
11th	THE ROOTS PC PC	Cenega
TBC	TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2 PS2, XB, GC, PC PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	Konami
TBC	DOOM 3 XB XBOX	Activision
TBC	WWE WRESTLEMANIA 21 XB XBOX	THQ

MARCH

1st	FREEDOM FORCE VS THE THIRD REICH PC PC	Digital Jesters
4th	ODDWORLD: STRANGERS' WRATH XB XBOX	EA
4th	STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO XB, PC XBOX PC	LucasArts
4th	TRACKMANIA SUNRISE PC PC	Digital Jesters
11th	FIFA STREET PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	EA
11th	SHADOW HEARTS: COVENANT PS2 PS2	Midway
12th	DUNGEON LORDS PC PC	DreamCatcher
18th	COLD FEAR PS2, XB, PC PS2 XBOX PC	Ubisoft
18th	MARIO PARTY 6 GC CUBE	Nintendo
18th	MEDAL OF HONOR: DOGS OF WAR PS2, XB, GC PS2 XBOX CUBE	EA
18th	TIMESPLITTERS - FUTURE PERFECT PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	EA
18th	YU YU HAKUSHO DARK TOURNAMENT PS2 PS2	Atari
25th	ADVENT RISING XB, PC XBOX PC	Vivendi
25th	ASTRO BOY PS2 PS2	SEGA
25th	BATTLEFIELD 2 PC PC	EA
25th	CONKER: LIVE AND RELOADED XB XBOX	Microsoft
25th	DEAD TO RIGHTS 2 PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Namco
25th	DEVIL MAY CRY 3 PS2 PS2	Capcom
25th	DUNGEON SIEGE 2 PC PC	Microsoft
25th	EYE TOY ANTIGRAV PS2 PS2	Sony
25th	FAR CRY INSTINCTS PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Ubisoft
25th	FOOTBALL GENERATION PS2 PS2	Midas
25th	FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR PS2 PS2	THQ
25th	JADE EMPIRE XB XBOX	Microsoft
25th	MATRIX ONLINE PC PC	SEGA
25th	METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER PS2 PS2	Konami
25th	MX VS ATV UNLEASHED PS2 PS2	THQ
25th	NOTORIOUS: DIE TO DRIVE PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	Ubisoft
25th	OPERATION FLASHPOINT: COLD WAR CRISIS XB XBOX	Codemasters
25th	TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 4 PS2, XB, GC, PC PS2 XBOX CUBE PC	Ubisoft
25th	RESIDENT EVIL 4 GC CUBE	Capcom
25th	SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY PC, XB, PS2 PC XBOX PS2	Ubisoft
25th	STALKER - SHADOW OF CHERNOBYL PC PC	THQ
25th	STAR WARS GALAXIES PS2, XB PS2 XBOX	LucasArts
25th	TAK 2 - THE STAFF OF DREAMS PS2, XB, GBA PS2 XBOX GBA	THQ
25th	THE SIMS 2: UNIVERSITY PC PC	EA
25th	TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON 2 PC, GC PC CUBE	Ubisoft
25th	VIETNAM: THE TET OFFENSIVE PS2, PC PS2 PC	Oxygen

- OUT: MARCH
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL
- PUBLISHER: EA
- ONLINE: DEATHMATCH
- SPECIAL: WIDESCREEN
- OTHER FORMATS: GC, XB
- CALL: 01932 450000
- PLAYERS: 1-4

The shell-case ejection's some of the nicest we've ever seen, especially when you're dual-wielding a pair of automatics. Smell that cordite...

There's the odd puzzle, but it's usually quite obvious what's expected of you - they're a nice little breather from the frenzied shooting.

UPDATE!

LAST PREVIEWED GM154 - NOW

TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT

Let's do the zombie zapping, robot battling time warp again...

Remember that bit in *Back To The Future 2* when Marty's behind the scenes at the senior prom? When he notices the school bullies sneaking up on an alternative version of him, and he has to take them out without his past self noticing and causing a time paradox?

Makes your head hurt, no? Now imagine that Marty's got a remote mine launcher, and the school bullies are electric zombies, and you've described nearly every level of *Future Perfect*. Nerk!

Fortunately, there's no brain-bending continuity to worry about in the new *'Splitters*. You can meet up with your past and future selves, chat to them, even give them a quick blast of buckshot – as long as you keep them alive enough to do the same for you in the next bit.

Future Perfect's heavy on co-operative action, see. When you're not saving your own ass, you're usually helping out one of the moustachioed wonders or lovely ladies that make up the rest of the cast.

The best thing about time travel, of course, is that there's no limit to the trouble you can get into. One minute you're battling robots in war-torn 2234 – the next, you're punishing fashion crimes in the 1960s. There's a heady blend of Free Radical humour combined with EA production values throughout – check out the guards arguing about who gets the coolest uniforms in the Harry Tipper level. And finally, there's a co-operative two-player version of Story mode – just imagine how much that would have helped young Marty...

"MARTY'S GOT A REMOTE MINE LAUNCHER AND THE SCHOOL BULLIES ARE ELECTRIC ZOMBIES"

Need to Know

What is it?

The third 'Splitters – the first was a PS2 title, made by some of the chaps behind the N64 version of GoldenEye. This is the first time it's been published by EA.

Facts

- Co-operative two-player mode – or an AI buddy.
- More than 100 unlockable characters, cheats and outfits for multi-player deathmatches.
- Multi-player modes include Vampire, Elimination, Bagtag, Fatman, Assault... and Monkey Assistant!

Rumour

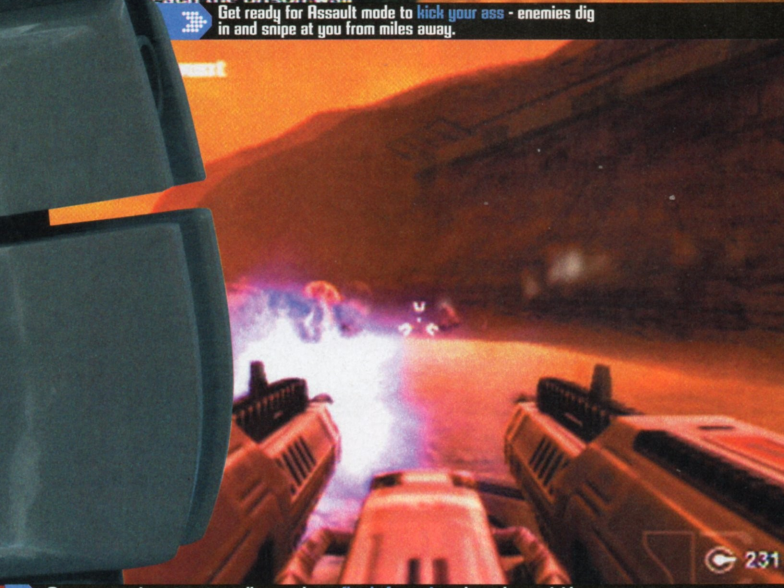
- John Vattic's an unlockable character

From the people who made...

TimeSplitters	86%
Second Sight	86%

The Splitters are toothier, meaner, and able to activate Predator-style camouflage. Just to really get on your nerves.

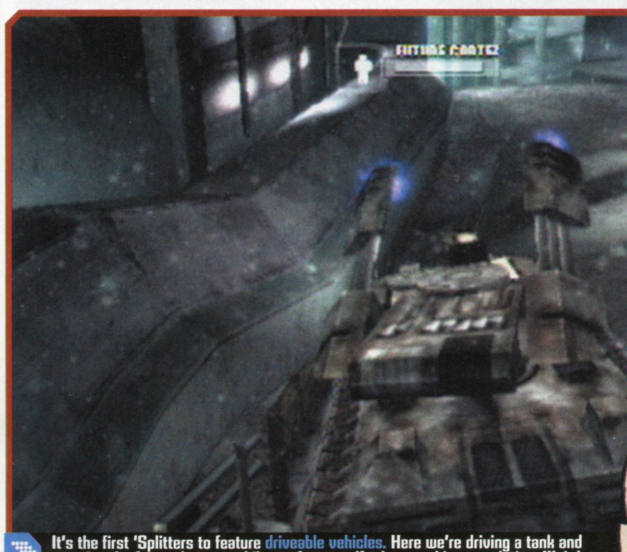
Get ready for Assault mode to kick your ass - enemies dig in and snipe at you from miles away.



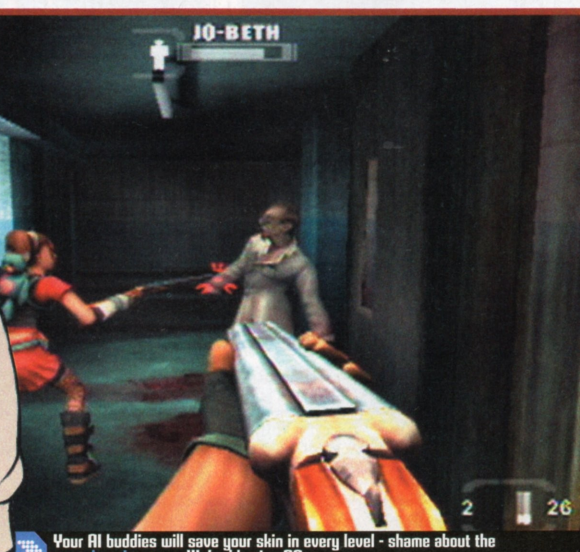
As ever, manning a turret usually provokes a flood of enemies who make a suicide run on your position. It's a bit tougher in deathmatch, when people start sneaking up behind you...

HAVE FULL, ALMOST FINISHED PLAYABLE CODE

LITTERS



It's the first 'Splitters to feature driveable vehicles. Here we're driving a tank and manning the forward turret, while our future self takes machine gun duties. Weird...



Your AI buddies will save your skin in every level - shame about the comedy voiceovers. We're blaming EA...

MEET YOUR GANG

You just play as one character – kickass slaphead Cortez – but your co-stars and enemies make for a fine multi-player roster.

Captain Ash is back, with facial hair more resplendent than ever.

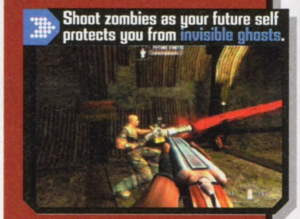
Also returning is '60s fashion icon detective Harry Tipper. Right on.

How's he going to carry a cat and a rocket launcher, eh?

And then there's monkey – the choice of cheats everywhere.

HWUH?!

Some levels let you 'team up' with yourself to tackle tricky sections – you play them twice, but you can die the second time round even if you survived before.



Shoot zombies as your future self protects you from invisible ghosts.

Then don the spookbusting kit while your former self takes point.

TURN BACK TIME

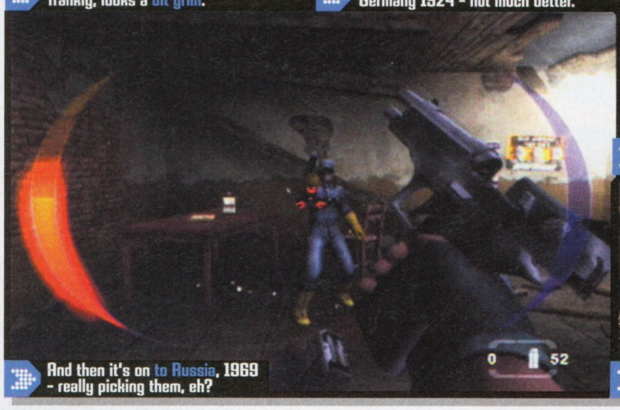
NEW! SHOTS

If we could, we'd probably go to 1966. Or maybe the swinging '70s. We certainly wouldn't go to any of the eras Cortez finds himself in. They're all a bit full of gun-toting nutcases, see?

Cortez lives in the year 2401 – which, frankly, looks a bit grim.

His first hop takes him back to Germany 1924 – not much better.

2234's the setting for the Machine Wars – again, not a popular holiday spot.



And then it's on to Russia, 1969 – really picking them, eh?

And then it's back to Vietnam for... well, take a guess...

And finally, there's this Tron-style VR setting. Shiny, but boring.

KEEP CONTROL

Bows and arrows are for wimps – this year, the discerning fragger packs a harpoon gun, ready to leave foes scurrying about with four feet of whale-impaling badness through their lungs.

↑ BUTTON

The D-pad deals with weapon selection – a quick flick of up or down selects alternate fire modes like the never-reliable 'richochet' setting.

R1 BUTTON

The all-new melee attack varies between weapons – from Halo-style pistol whippings to shotgun butt-thwack that's enough to decapitate most zombies.

R2 BUTTON

R2 is shoot. If you can't remember this, you'll be in trouble fast.

△ BUTTON

Triangle takes care of manual reloading – you don't want to get caught short in battle.

L1 BUTTON

Ease of use makes 'Splitters sniper mode one of the most useful in FPS Christendom.

L2 BUTTON

This takes care of secondary weapons such as greandes.

⊗ BUTTON

X takes care of 'actions' – which can range from simply opening a door to hopping inside a gun emplacement or a massive tank.

◻ BUTTON

There's still no jumping – hey, even EA won't mess with tradition that much – but tapping ◻ puts you in the traditional crouching crab-scuttle. Perfect for deathmatch kneecappings.

DON'T MANSION IT

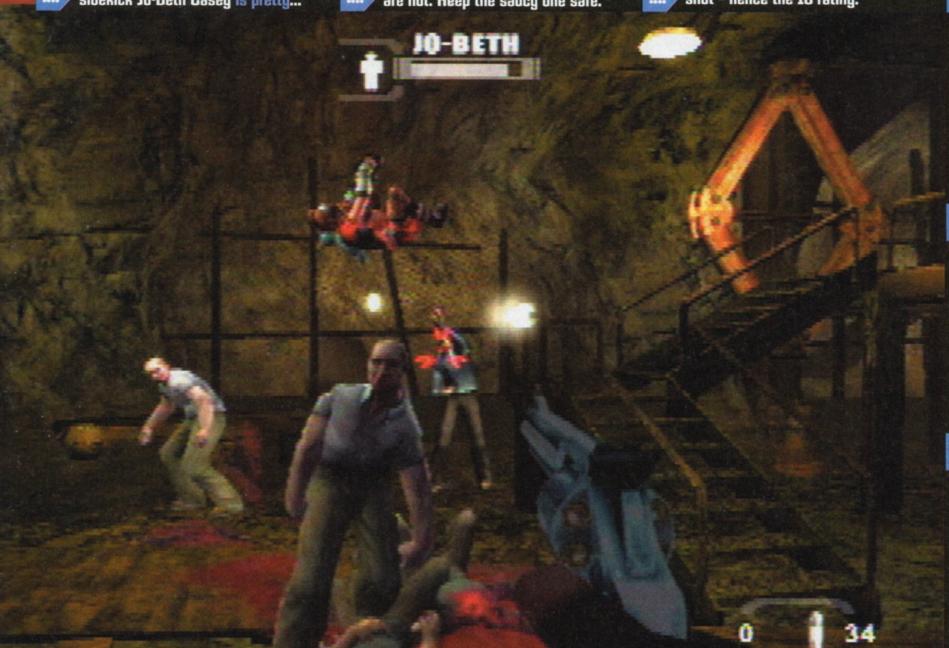
The Mansion level, with its swarms of groaning, behead-able zombies, has been a classic level since the first game was released. This time, though, it's split into two parts, each stuffed with more set-pieces than entire lesser FPSs.

The first lesson you'll learn: your sidekick Jo-Beth Casey is pretty...

...But her drooling zombie doubles are not. Keep the saucy one safe.

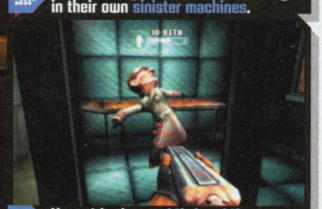
Zombies explode like melons when shot – hence the 18 rating.

There's a mine cart bit that's similar to arcade classic *Rail Chase*...



The best bit has to be protecting Jo-Beth as she dangles from a trapdoor. Fish-in-a-barrel time...

...followed by some scientists hiding in their own sinister machines.



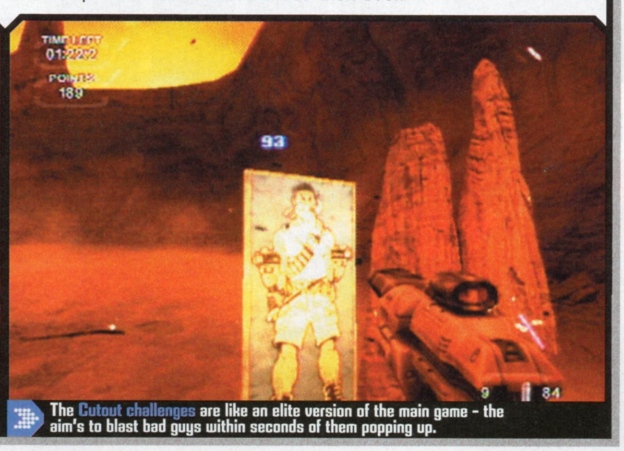
Yes – it's the monkify/zombify toggle. Hope you like bananas.

You've got to dispose of a beauty, armed with a repeating harpoon gun.

THE BOUNTY

We lost hours of our lives to the Gold level challenges in 'Splitters 2, but it looks like they've been toned down slightly for this version. Fans of needless destruction needn't worry, though – the new weapons make for more chaos than ever.

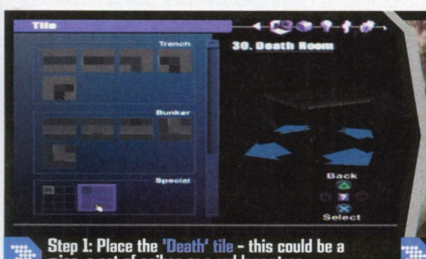
The inanimate object smash; an old favourite. There's three varieties here – sniping bottles, smashing plates and flinging timed mines at ancient vases...



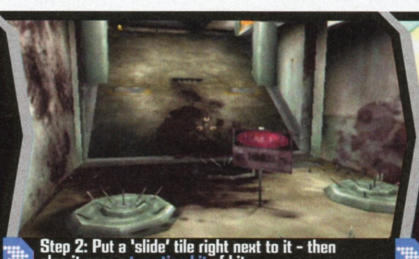
The Cutout challenges are like an elite version of the main game – the aim's to blast bad guys within seconds of them popping up.

WASTE DISPOSAL

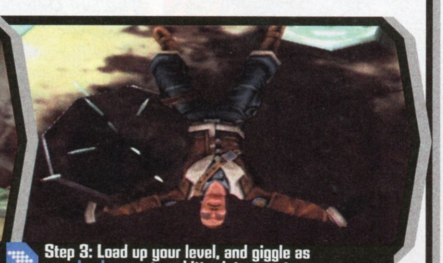
The Mapmaker's been around since the first *'Splitters*, but back then it felt like a Lego kit that had nothing but big rectangular blocks in it. This time, though, it's been enhanced – tiles are split into subsets like 'ramp', 'stairs' or 'corner', and you can see what they'll all look like without going into preview mode. As well as picking music and lighting themes, it's possible to select weather for your map – perfect for those snowbound shootouts – and with the grimy medieval theme, it even looks a bit like the GM office. And then there's the one new tile that everybody loves...



Step 1: Place the 'Death' tile – this could be a mine, a set of spikes or a red laser-trap.



Step 2: Put a 'slide' tile right next to it – then slap it near a tempting bit of kit.



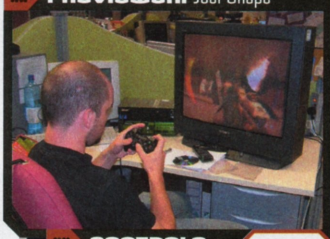
Step 3: Load up your level, and giggle as your hapless mates skitter into your trap.

HANDS ON VERDICT

TimeSplitters FUTURE PERFECT

HOW FINISHED? 80%

PREVIEWER: Joel Snape



CONTROLS

- △ - MANUAL RELOAD
- ○ - CROUCH
- ✕ - ACTION
- R1 - MELEE
- R2 - FIRE
- L1 - THROW GRENADE
- L2 - AIM

WE PLAYED IT IN...

The *GM* Office

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ☑ Story mode
- ☑ The challenges
- ☑ Four player
- ☑ Assault mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Just like the last two, only cleverly EA-ified – the opening level's almost like a futuristic *Medal Of Honor*, with howling team-mates spicing up the set-piece action. The framerate is even smoother than before, the characters look less French, and the guns wobble about less. In short – brilliant.

ANY PROBLEMS?

With checkpoints after every half-dozen enemies, it'll be almost too easy for fans of FPSs.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Covering yourself with a sniper rifle in a classic bit of time-skip wizardry. Confusing but fun.

VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Four-player carnage
+ The new level editor
+ Comedy genius character design

GM HATES

- The new easiness – we're so nails
- People who pick the monkey

MOST WANTED METER

Solo play doesn't appeal, but it'll still be the best four-player FPS on PS2, or we'll eat our parents. Let's hope EA can convince people to buy it.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Doom 3, Killzone
BIGGEST RIVAL: ..Project Black
OUR SOONER: .....Oddworld : Stranger's Wrath 25th February

• OUT: MARCH • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £39.99 (TBC)
• DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
• ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: PS2 • CALL: 020 8846 2550 • PLAYERS: 1

Tyrant? Loser. Nemesis? Wimp. This here freak is the new king of the Resi beasties. Watch the tree - he's liable to smack you with it.

Videogame rule No. 1 - never stand too close to any nearby incendary devices.

In the mouth of madness. Well, a bloody great fish actually.

Don't worry, we didn't pull the trigger. We did cap a chicken though. It died.

UPDATE!

LAST PREVIEWED IN GM154, WE'VE NOW PLAYED AN ALMOST COMPLETE VERSION

RESIDENT EVIL 4

It's a European Vacation you will never forget...

No more demos, no more quick peeks, as we've got our hands on the whole of *Resi 4*! And it's rocks like a mad kid in a corner. We can't overstate how much messy, visceral, horrific fun this game is – and how violent. *Resi* has always been generous when it came to gore, but this is flying-a-spitfire-through-an-abattoir, puppy-in-a-blender nasty.

In the old style, rendered background *Resi*, you be sent reeling in part celebration/part wince by the glorious zombie headshots – aim up, wait till they were in your face, then BLAM! There wasn't a feeling in games that could match it. Well imagine having that feeling every time you pull the trigger. The sounds effects and animation combine in to one big crimson celebration of offal.

Resi has really changed. There's no longer a classic haunted house of dusty terrors, as this game is full-on action. The horror is not mere suggestion or all in the mind – it's there, right in front of you, wearing a sack on its head, trying to splatter through your neck with a chainsaw. Fans of *The Evil Dead* and the new super-charged *Dawn of the Dead* film are going to love it.

Those who took delight in finding emblems in books and pushing statues around, though, might not be so happy, as the puzzles you have to complete aren't given a chance to slow down the game's momentum.

This may be puzzle-light and far more linear than we'd imagine, but it still feels like a *Resi* game. The dumb acting and schlocky plot are there, as is the menacing atmosphere and the visuals are to die for. Nothing is pre-rendered here, yet this is a mark above most games. It might not have *Half-Life* technical excellence or *Halo*'s shine and polish, but it oozes character. The boss animation, for example, is awe-inspiring. When you get to go up against the Village Chief, you'll know what we mean.

We can't reveal much plot (at Capcom's request), so you'll have to wait to find out just what's wrong with those villagers. Next month, though, we'll have an exclusive interview with the makers and a full review. GM

It's hilarious when they drop their own torches. Serves them right.

Need to Know

What is it?

Capcom have completely blown the Resi rulebook to pieces. This is Resident Evil rejuvenated, rehabilitated and re-assimilated!

Facts

- Every weapon you collect can be customised with parts or levelled up
- You can spend money on improving gun loading speed and shot power
- The levels lend themselves to free-roaming exploration, there's actually set paths that have been carved out
- The villagers aren't zombies

Rumour

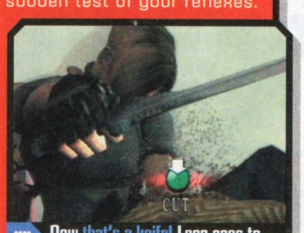
- Ada Wong makes an appearance.

From the people who made...

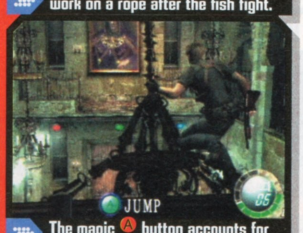
Shadow of Rome 85%
Viewtiful Joe 90%

TAPPED UP

Capcom have used something similar to Shenmue's *Real Time Action* system in the tense cutscenes. Just when you think you can relax, it's a sudden test of your reflexes.

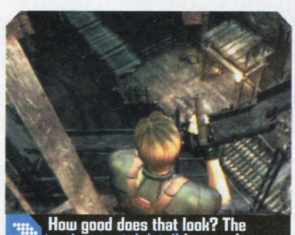


Now that's a knife! Leon goes to work on a rope after the fish fight.



The magic A button accounts for any platforming that's required.

There's dogs. You couldn't have a *Resi* without some dogs.



How good does that look? The environmental detail is superb.

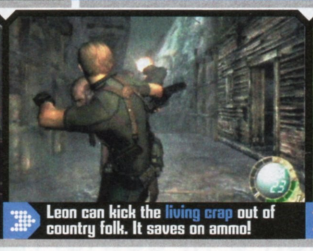
The laser sight comes in handy when enemies play hide and seek

"WE CAN'T OVERSTATE HOW MUCH MESSY, HORRIFIC FUN THIS IS"

SURPRISE!

In *Resi 4*, the surprises don't just come in the shape of mad villagers, as you're constantly presented with new gameplay and features you'd never have thought possible from *Resi*.

Leon gets to chat and flirt with his HQ help, just like *Solid Snake*.



Leon can kick the living crap out of country folk. It saves on ammo!

Leon can sail boats! And then get attacked by huge killer fish!

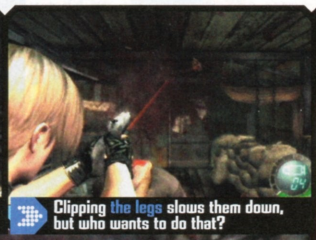
And how about taking out a van driver with a sniper rifle?

POP-POP GOES THE NINE

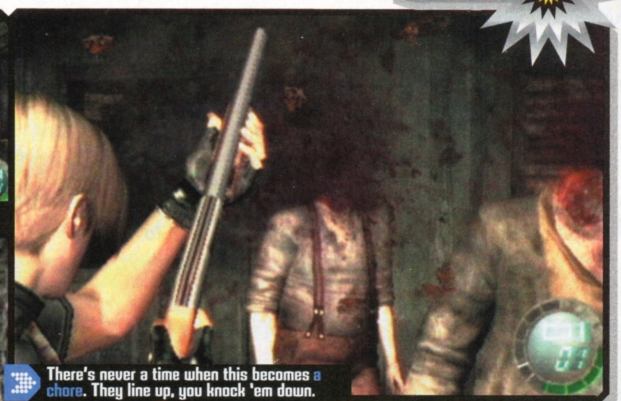
EXCLUSIVE SHOTS!

The villager attacks are relentless – there's wave after wave of them. But even though they think they're smart with their axe throwing and dodging, there's little they can do with a shotgun blast!

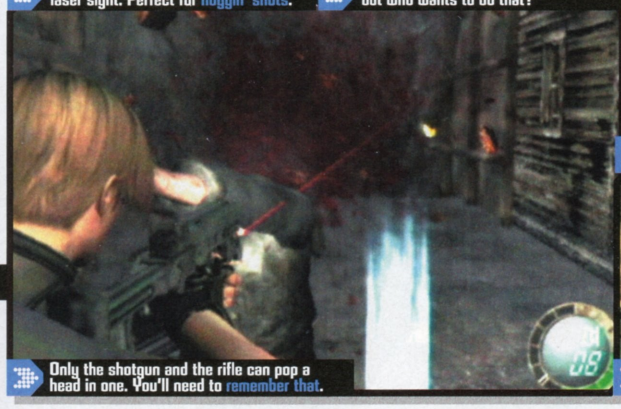
Just like the pistol, the shotgun has a laser sight. Perfect for noggin' shots.



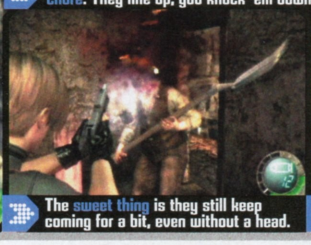
Clipping the legs slows them down, but who wants to do that?



There's never a time when this becomes a chore. They line up, you knock 'em down.



Only the shotgun and the rifle can pop a head in one. You'll need to remember that.



The sweet thing is they still keep coming for a bit, even without a head.

And lastly, here's proof that Leon gets killed - it's spectacular.

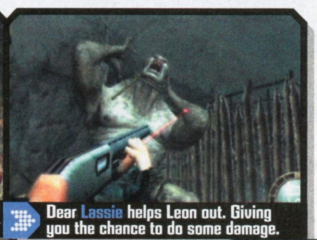
TROLL CAMPBELL

After the monster trout, Gigante is the second boss battle and it's incredible! You hide behind a tree, he picks it out the ground. Then he spanks you with it.

Here's our man, making a dramatic entrance. What a star.

Did you help the dog earlier on? You really wish you did.

He's so just so affectionate! Joystick waggling will get you free.



Dear Lassie helps Leon out. Giving you the chance to do some damage.

Here's what the big fella looks like dead. Or maybe he's sleeping; don't be surprised to see him show up a little later. The big ray of light is *Resi 4*'s subtle way of telling you there's an item on the floor.

FEATURING! Blood-curdling bosses

HANDS ON VERDICT

RESIDENT EVIL 4

HOW FINISHED? 35hr

PREVIEWER: Dave

CONTROLS

- A - FIRE
- Y - INVENTORY
- X - GIVE COMMAND
- B - RUN
- R - AIM
- L - RAISE KNIFE

WE PLAYED IT AT...

The *GM* crypt

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ☑ The first four chapters of the game.
- ☑ Defeated three bosses
- ☑ Collected treasure

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Imagine *House of the Dead*, meets *Shenmue* but with all the menace of *Manhunt*. This is a glorious and shameless joy of a videogame that feels sophisticated, but at its heart is big, dumb fun. The handling is initially tricky, but you'll soon be popping heads like grapes.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The controls do take time to get used to. You expect it to function like a normal dual analogue.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Facing up to the sack-wearing chainsaw carriers. Or the house siege alongside Luis.

VERDICT

5

GM LOVES

+ Everything. An intense, gut wrenching, blood splattered assault on the senses.

GM HATES

- Sorting out the inventory. It's like a really boring game of Tetris.

MOST WANTED METER

Resi 4 will make a whole new generation of gamers cherish *Resi*. If we're still talking about the *Evil* in ten years time, this is the why.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: Doom 3
BIGGEST RIVAL: Silent Hill
OUT SOONER: The US version. 11th January

• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: XB
• PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • PUBLISHER: EIDOS
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, PC • CALL: 020 8636 3000 • PLAYERS: 1-16

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

Snow joke – we could have a *Halo 2* killer on our hands...

More than a few eyebrows were raised when Crystal *Legacy of Kain* Dynamics announced that they were developing an First Person Shooter. After all, with *Doom 3*, *Half Life 2*, *Goldeneye: Rogue Agent*, *Timesplitters: Future Perfect* and *Halo 2* (phew!) knocking about, the genre is positively brimming with talent.

Set in the Far East, you are peacekeeping grunt Nathan Frost. After taking one hit too many, he is resurrected as a bio-enhanced super soldier. Now Frost battles to thwart the plans of a renegade militia. We loaded up the demo with a cynical jib, only to come away with a soppy smile on our fat chops. You see, it's likely that *Snowblind* will kick arse.

Alongside the usual FPS fare such as the shotgun, assault carbine and sniper rifle, there's also more inventive gear like the icepick and *Unreal Tournament* -style flechette. All weapons also have a secondary fire option, which means more ways to inflict pain. Okay by us!

But wait – *Snowblind*'s ace card has yet to reveal itself. The game belies its *Deus Ex* origins, as Frost has been installed with all kinds of superhuman capabilities to help vanquish the bad guys. From slow motion and invisibility, to riot walls and electrical storms, Frost is one guy you really wouldn't want to bump into on a dark night.

Further fun is to be had in *Snowblind*'s squad-based elements. Although it isn't thought out in the same way as *Rainbow Six*, looking after your men will be vital to progress through the missions. Altogether, *Snowblind* is looking generally ace and come February, don't be surprised if more than a few of your mates are saying goodbye to *Halo*. GM

Need to Know

What is it?

A Deus Ex lovechild, Snowblind has since thrown off the Clan Wars shackles and evolved into a vision of bioengineering and conspiracy theories.

Facts

- An FPS – with a difference
- Unique special bio abilities
- Loads of cool gadgets to wreak havoc with. 24, to be precise.
- The open environments lend themselves to strategy, so you can attack from all angles.
- Vehicles!

Rumour

- Lee Majors set to make a cameo

From the people who made...

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 90%
Whiplash.....73%

It's snowpick time for these unfortunate buggers.

Eat electromagnetic death rebel scum!

BIOHAZARD

Deus Ex's JC Denton would hang his head in shame at the amount of firepower you'll be packing in *Snowblind*. Our man Nathan Frost is more than just a bit handy with a Glock: he can also get the job done thanks to some gizmos that wouldn't look out of place in an episode of the *Six Million Dollar Man*. From simple shields and invisibility to full-on Electric Storms, Frost takes the fight to the enemy like Arnie in *The Terminator*. Here are some of the super powers we've got our mitts on so far.

Slooooww moottiion. Think *Max Payne* bullet-time.

Invisibility. This is very handy for scoping out the joint.

Force Field. Protects you from damage for a short period of time.

Enhanced vision: it's like night vision. Makes enemies stick out like a sore thumb.

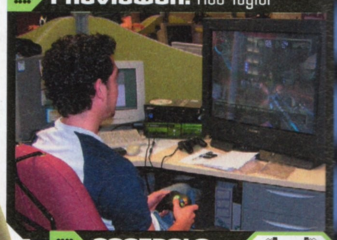
Electric storm: Sends a blast of electricity to shock enemies into submission.

HANDS ON VERDICT

PROJECT: SNOWBLIND

HOW FINISHED? 75%

PREVIEWER: Rob Taylor



CONTROLS

- A - CROUCH
- Y - BIO ENHANCEMENT
- X - JUMP
- R - FIRE
- L - ALTERNATIVE FIRE

WE PLAYED IT AT...

GM's bionetics lab/office

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] 5 of the 11 missions
- [x] Single-player
- [x] Online
- [x] The vehicles

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Beautifully. It's a winning combination of all the best bits of its rivals: controls as smoothly as *Halo*, with a touch of *Deus Ex* wizardry and *Rainbow Six* squad action thrown in for good measure. What more could you ask for?

ANY PROBLEMS?

Not so far. Fingers crossed, this one is shaping up to be summat special.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Using our slow motion bio abilities to slaughter an entire garrison of troops in seconds.

VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The coolness
+ Stylised graphics.
+ The squad element
+ The bio enhancements

GM HATES
- The release date: we want to play this now.
- That we're not as slick as Nathan Frost!

MOST WANTED METER

Nope – we're still not sick of shooters, especially when they're so perfectly formed as this. Bring it on!

8.2

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Halo 2 (XB)
BIGGEST RIVAL: .....Halo 2
OUT SOONER: .....Timesplitters Future Perfect, March

• OUT: 16TH APRIL • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: KONAMI • PUBLISHER: KONAMI
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: GBA, GC, PC, XB • CALL: 020 8987 5730 • PLAYERS: 1-4

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 2: BATTLENEXUS

Heroes in a half-shell – they're on a mission...

If the original *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* game was a pizza – bear with us here – then *Battlenexus* would be, um, exactly the same pizza, but with a gentle sprinkling of parmesan cheese. Because – yes – it's exactly the same game, only a little bit tastier. But not much.

What's changed, then? Well, the viewpoint's slightly higher up, to cope with the increased frequency of platformy bits, there's a pleasing new 'infinite shuriken' power up, and the bosses are slightly tougher. The big news, though, is that all four Turtles regularly get involved. There's still no AI support option, but you can flick between any of the Turtles at any time – although, strangely, they all share the same health bar. This is crucial, because things seem a lot tougher this time round. So making the most of abilities, such as Donatello's defensive shield and Mikey's impressive airborne fighting skills, is important. More importantly, it's also possible to play as all four turtles together if you've got a suitable posse of mates around. All that, and it'll include the 1991 *Turtles Arcade* game (which we played for an entire afternoon once in Weston-Super-Mare) as an unlocked extra. Cowa-freakin'-bunga.

Joel Snape GM

Need to Know

What is it?

The sequel to the remake of the Turtles - there were about 20-odd games back when they were Heroes, not Ninjas, but that was when Coke cost 30p a can and games were all rubbish.

Facts

- More than 50 stages.
- Multiple routes.
- Voiceovers from the animated show.
- Little cartoony interludes created especially for the game.

Rumour

- Corey 'Lost Boys' Feldman will be voicing Donatello in the fourth film.

From the people who made...

Metal Gear Solid: Substance 94%
Dancing Stage Megamix 74%

They may have poncey names, but they're pretty handy with weapons.

This is only the first boss, and he took us three goes to beat. Mother.

GM Verdict

GM LOVES
+ Mikey's nunchaku-twirling kick move
+ The infinite shuriken attack

GM HATES
- The platform jumping
- Having to kill everything before you're allowed to move on

MOST WANTED METER

Let's face it - we didn't exactly love the last Turtles game, and this is practically the same, except with villains from the second series.

GM 592

SHELLING OUT

As everyone knows, rats are big fans of fifteenth-century Tuscan painting, so it's no surprise that the turtles are named after some of the foremost artists of the period.

Leonardo has a long-range sword blast, and invented the helicopter.

Donatello can form a shield with his bo. That's a staff, by the way.

Michelangelo is famous for skating and painting a big roof.

Raphael carries a pair of sai and painted the *Transfiguration*.

• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: KONAMI
• PUBLISHER: KONAMI • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 020 8987 5730 • PLAYERS: 1

SUIKODEN 4

Get by with a little help from your friends...

Just imagine getting 108 mates together to battle injustice – wouldn't that be brilliant? Especially if they were pirates, thugs, brutes and spies, and you could regularly listen in on them while they were in a confession box, to find out everything about their shady pasts. Wow.

Well, good news if you haven't got 108 friends... or a confession box... or the willpower to get off the sofa – that's exactly what you'll be able to do in *Suikoden 4*.

Set 150 years before the original, it's the first in the series to include voice acting,

The combat's been simplified slightly – you're now restricted to four members in a party. There's no need to faff about with 'ranks', and though random battles are still pretty frequent, they're quickly dealt with. The most welcome returning feature, though, has to be the mini-games. New ones include fishing and gambling, although mah jongg's still easily the most addictive. *Suikoden 4* won't be for everyone – even casual RPG fans probably won't like it – but it looks like a solid addition to the series. Now we need more friends...

Joel Snape GM

Need to Know

What is it?

Based on the legend of 108 people who banded together to fight injustice.

Facts

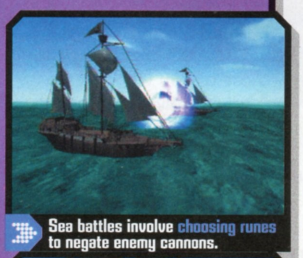
- Combat takes place between ships and on land.
- Characters can team up to pull off special 'friendship' attacks.

From the People who made...

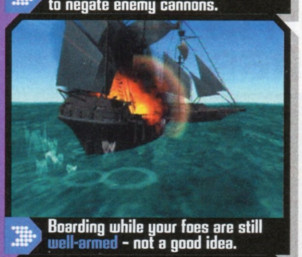
Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater 95%
Silent Hill 4 .....72%
Castlevania 83%

FIRE IT UP

Whether you're living it up on the ocean or hanging out in back alleys, one thing that's always certain in *Suikoden* is that - thanks to the random battles - you're going to be fighting. A lot. Here's how to avoid the unfriendly fire.

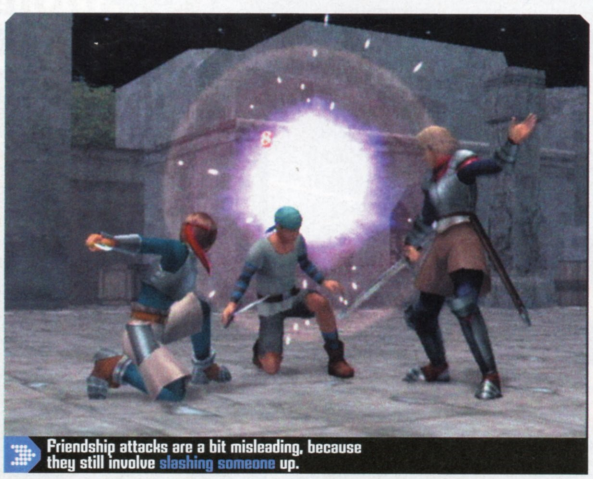


Sea battles involve choosing runes to negate enemy cannons.

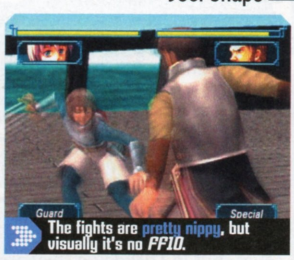


Boarding while your foes are still well-armed - not a good idea.

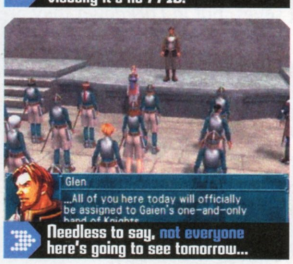
It's easier to take people out when you've got a posse of chums.



Friendship attacks are a bit misleading, because they still involve slashing someone up.



The fights are pretty nippy, but visually it's no *FFIX*.



Needless to say, not everyone here's going to see tomorrow...

Levelling up's a cinch early on, thanks to plentiful bandits.

GM Verdict

GM LOVES
+ The pacy battles
+ The character development

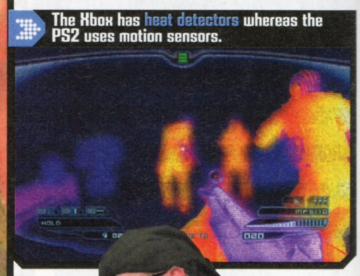
GM HATES
- The frequency of random battles
- The garish graphics

MOST WANTED METER

Solid stuff for RPG fans, but the boring textures and general greyness aren't exactly going to snag people who like *FFIX* and *Kingdom Hearts*.

GM 592

- OUT: SPRING
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEVELOPER: RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT
- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- ONLINE: CO-OP
- OTHER FORMATS: XB, PC
- CALL: 01932 838230
- PLAYERS: 1-16



The Xbox has heat detectors whereas the PS2 uses motion sensors.

Machine guns, helicopters, explosions... All in a day's work for *Team Rainbow*.

RAINBOW SIX: LOCKDOWN

Rainbow comes under attack. This time it's personal...

The inevitability of a major terrorist attack may be a source of constant, er, terror, but in the world of videogames, it's big business. Blockbuster novelist Tom Clancy's endorsement of the *Rainbow Six* series has racked in the cash, and while you keep buying them, they'll keep making them.

For those unfamiliar with the series, Rainbow Six is a top-secret counter-terrorist unit of four operatives that can be called into action at the drop of a grenade pin. Headed up by the absurdly-named Ding Chavez, these four characters have been the mainstay of the series, but in *Lockdown* they are joined by a further six operatives, three of them female, and one of them engaged to *Rainbow* regular Dieter Weber.

While that may sound like the back-story to a *WWE* game, *Lockdown* is aiming for a darker feel than previous releases. The overriding theme is Rainbow under attack, with a coalition of terrorist outfits targeting them, presumably having grown weary of their constant meddling.

DING-DANG-DO

Again, you take control of Ding, ordering your team-mates into dangerous situations while you lurk at the back, loosing off the odd round when it looks safe. But in a departure from the series, some missions also require you to play the part of German bighead, Dieter Weber, who has been reinvented as a sniper. Taking a very different form to the traditional missions, these typically have Dieter perched above the action, picking off enemies while the others take care of business.

A big effort is also being made on the online side, with Live users able to follow a career mode that operates like a role-playing game, with levelling up enabling you to buy better equipment. Elsewhere, the game is being made more accessible to the casual player, with the easiest level offering auto-aim as well as brackets around the enemy. This is good news for those of you who tend to inadvertently shoot the hostage.

There's a hell of a lot to look forward to in *Lockdown*, provided those terrorists don't get us first...

Steve Hill GM

"LOCKDOWN IS AIMING FOR A DARKER FEEL"

Lockdown uses the latest in Havok 2 ragdoll physics. Innit.

It's all very well laughing, but somebody is going to have to pay for that.

Need to Know

What is it?

The fourth installment of Tom Clancy's multi-million selling series sees elite counter-terrorist unit, Team Rainbow, come under attack.

Facts

- Team Rainbow is extended to ten members, including three new female agents
- There are six game modes, two co-operative, and 10 multi-player maps
- The new Xbox Live Career Mode allows players to create their own operative

Rumour

- Dieter Weber rescues his own fiancée.

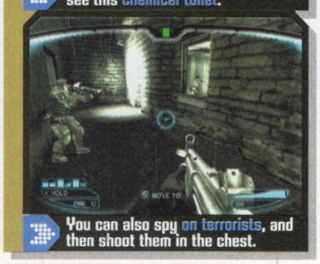
From the people who made...

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 85%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 .....86%

G'NIGHT!

No need to stumble around in the dark, stubbing your toe and giving away your position to evil terrorists. Simply employ special night-vision goggles to turn night into day.

Night-vision goggles enable you to see this chemical toilet.



You can also spy on terrorists, and then shoot them in the chest.

ZOOM IN

Team Rainbow regular, Dieter Weber appears in *Lockdown* as a playable character, featuring as a sniper in at least six missions. From an elevated view, you can zoom in on terrorist pigs and shoot them in the temple. So while the rest of the team are going about their business rescuing hostages and the like, as Weber you're responsible for keeping them safe from hidden shooters.

Clear a path for your squad-mates by picking off the terrorists.

As a sniper, you get to wear this attractive pair of special goggles.

Locate the enemy, zoom in and squeeze the trigger. They deserve it.

OPEN DOORS

A large part of *Rainbow Six* involves opening doors, or if you're a coward, getting your squad-mates to open them. Ideally with some kind of explosive.

The PS2 version: explosives in place and ready to break the door.

Might as well toss a grenade in there just to make sure.

And on Xbox, stand back and tell them to light the blue touch paper.

That did the trick, your safety goggles ensured you weren't blinded.

AROUND THE WORLD

Being part of an international counter-terrorist elite isn't without its perks. Sure, there's the perennial risk of a sudden and violent death, but the opportunities for overseas travel are excellent.

NEW SHOTS

Welcome to Algeria. The public transport is prone to terrorist attacks.

An ideal location for the adventurous agent, there is rarely a dull moment.

This market in Marseilles is perfect for bargain-hunters and special operatives.

The catacombs of Paris offer fun for counter-terrorist organisations.

South Africa offers a hearty welcome from the locals.

The weather can be changeable, so pack bullet-proof vests.

FIGHT FIRE...

There will be times in *Lockdown* when you are faced with no choice but to get involved in a fire fight.

01 Another relaxing day at the office for Ding Chavez and Team Rainbow.

02 Shoot first, ask questions later. Got a moustache? He must be a terrorist.

03 In retrospect, that probably wasn't the best place to stand.

04 A man on the roof? No problem for the heavily-armed Team Rainbow.

A terrorist coalition is trying to kill you. And it's raining.

05 A fruit and veg market ravaged by the ongoing war on terror.

06 Okay, who shot the school bus with the grenade launcher? Civilians can be a nuisance...

VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ Being able to play as a sniper and shoot unsuspecting people in the head.

GM HATES
- The dubious AI, which will need some tweaking before release.

MOST WANTED METER

The new features will make this an essential purchase for fans of the long-running series, and may lure in newcomers as well.

CAN'T WAIT?
MOST LIKE: .....Pull Spectrum Warrior, 85%
BIGGEST RIVAL: ....Splinter Cell, 90%

OUT: 4TH FEBRUARY • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: BITS STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: SCI • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: PS2 • CALL: 020 7585 3308 • PLAYERS: 1

CONSTANTINE

Could it be magic? Or just an excellent adventure?

Alright, squire? For anyone who hasn't heard of him, John Constantine's a bit of a geezer, a lad, an alcoholic, chain-smoking, fast-talking man-about-town who prefers magic to the old fisticuffs. Or at least, he is in DC comic *Hellblazer*. In the film, he's Keanu Reeves. And he's got a gun. Whoah.

It won't be too much of a surprise, then, when we say that *Constantine*'s a lot like *Max Payne* with the odd bit of hocus-pocus chucked in. John-boy skips between L.A and its hellish counterpart, searching for clues about why demons seem to be coming to Earth, solving puzzles and shooting lots of demons in the face. What lifts this above the usual third-person yawnfest is the tremendously spooky atmosphere. Everywhere you walk, basketballs bounce, car alarms go off and scenery mysteriously collapses, as if something's out to get John. Hellish L.A's an odd, warped version of the real place, with eerie heat-shimmer. As things get nastier, dead bodies start coming to life and rats suddenly pour out of disused pipes – it's a cut above the bad guys just teleporting in for a scrap.

What's less clear is how advanced the fighting's going to get. John's has a combination of magic, melee and bullet-based attacks, but he's a bit short on evasive moves for tricky situations. He'll leap chasms and climb ledges automatically, occasionally dragging dumpsters and crates around for a bit of Croft-style exploration, but he's not exactly acrobatic. And although he might not have much competition in the film world, on PS2 there's a certain P.I. known as Dante to contend with...

Not much fazes Keanu. Haunted cars barely merit a one liner.

Hell's actually a lot like L.A in the summer. Less hobos, though.

Although John's a bit tasty with shooters, he's no *Max Payne*. He's barely even a Nick Kang.

Need to Know

What is it?

It's the game of the film of the Vertigo comic – or, if you've never seen that, it's Max Payne crossed with Buffy The Vampire Slayer.

Facts

- Keanu's real face and voice are in the game – in your face, Fight Club.
- It follows the plot of the film. Sort of.
- One of the most popular writers of the comic – Garth Ennis – is now working on the script for the videogame version of The Punisher.

Rumour

- They're planning a second film...

From the people who made...

Rogue Ops	54%
Die Hard: Vendetta	79%
Alien 3	80%

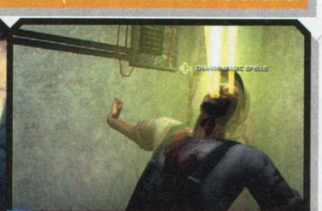
PIFF PAFF POOF!

Hanging above the Thames in a box? Pulling rabbits out of a hat? Pah! Constantine's a real magician, with Bemani powers that put David Blaine to shame.

Press Y to lay the magical smackdown on enemies...

Time slows down so input the relevant button commands.

Stormbreaker's your basic, and handy, smart bomb attack.



But Exorcism's specialised, and only works on possessed humans.

IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC

Being a supernatural detective, Constantine relies on a cunning combination of spells, ultraviolence and a really cool jacket. It's amazing how much devil-battling kit people leave lying around in L.A slums.

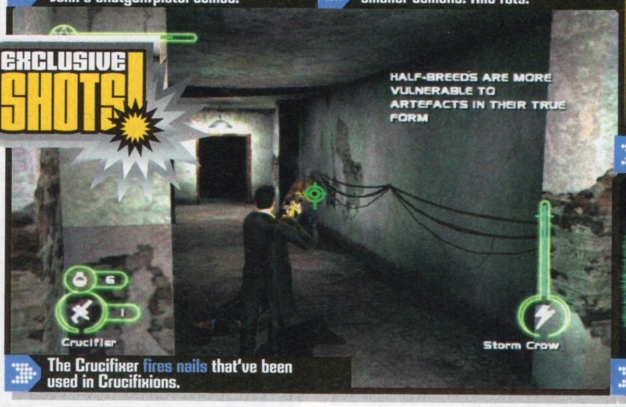
NEW SHOTS

The Witch's Curse is a posh name for John's shotgun/pistol combo.

He can also pistol-whip or stamp on smaller demons. And rats.

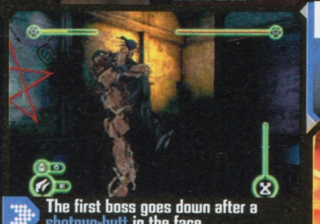
Holy water reveals the True Form of human-shaped demonic adversaries.

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS!



The Crucifixer fires nails that've been used in Crucifixions.

John's True Sight reveals hidden doorways or clues.



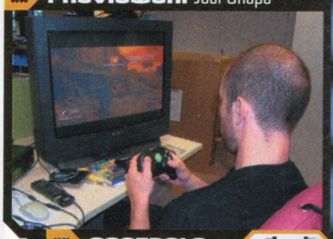
The first boss goes down after a shotgun-butt in the face.

HANDS ON VERDICT

CONSTANTINE

HOW FINISHED? 30%

PREVIEWER: Joel Snape



CONTROLS

- A - TRUE SIGHT
- Y - CAST SPELL
- B - MELEE ATTACK
- R - FIRE PRIMARY WEAPON
- L - FIRE SECONDARY WEAPON

WE PLAYED IT AT...

The *GM* office. At night.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ☑ 30% single-player mode
- ☑ The Theatrical Trailer - hmm...

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

We're concerned that it might be a little bit basic for veterans of the third-person shooter genre. John hasn't got the diving attacks we're used to, and his bullet-time-style 180 spin's a bit too unreliable to be useful in a heated scrap. The magic's a nice touch, though.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Constantine won't always go where he's told – so you think you can't climb ledges that you can.

BEST BIT SO FAR

When all the cars start bouncing up and down – and then something really scary happens...

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The spooky atmosphere – playing late at night made us jump. Well, once.

GM HATES

– The transition from gritty Liverpudlian to cocky yank – but that's hardly SCi's fault.

MOST WANTED METER

Without much to set this apart from other shooters, it's like a faster-paced, less atmospheric Silent Hill. It might get lost in the crowd...

5 4 3 2 1

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Max Payne.
BIGGEST RIVAL: Devil May Cry 3
OUT SOONER: ..Bulletproof Monk, out now

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• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: VOLITION • PUBLISHER: THQ
• ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: XB, PC • CALL: 01483 767656 • PLAYERS: 1

SCORE

Points mean prizes - bronze, silver or gold medals in fact. The bigger the score you build up through classy butchering techniques, the more bonus features you'll unlock back at Castle's apartment.

HEALTH

You'll lose this by being shot, obviously. But you can regain it through interrogating thugs, giving you more incentive than ever to use your imagination when picking upon those weaker than Frankie Castle.

RAGE METER

Build this up by killing. The longer the bar, the more time slaughter mode will last. This mode restores health to Castle, so there's no excuse not to whip your knives out.

AMMO

Run out of this and you're dead. Collect lots and you'll be happier than a fat kid in a sweet shop.

Teach them some respect for the dead.

The sniper rifle gives those SOBs no chance. And that's the way we like it!

UPDATE!

FIRST PREVIEWED IN GM156. NOW WE'VE PLAYED A NEARLY FINISHED VERSION

THE PUNISHER

Pun-time Frankie in a punishing frame of mind...

Need to Know

What is it?

The ultra violent saga of vigilante ex-cop Frank Castle. Closely aligned to the Marvel comics, with a sprinkling of the recent film in there as well.

Facts

- Unique interrogation system
- More than 100 unique kills
- Punishment mode: Kill as many enemies as you can as spectacularly as possible for extra goodies.

Rumour

- Alternative ending sees Castle running a kitten sanctuary.

From the people who made...

Red Faction 90%
Freespace 2 ..... 87%

MAX PAIN

In *The Punisher* you're forever aiming to maximise the pain you inflict on your foes. And their pain is the Punisher's pleasure, as interrogating your victims increases your strength.

Keep an eye out for the glowing white Punisher skulls.

Replenish your strength by interrogating captured villains.

Things have been looking grim for Marvel's anti-hero Frank Castle – a man in danger of being remembered for awful box office disasters starring the likes of straight-to-video specialist Dolph "I muust break you" Lundgren and tight-panted disco legend John Travolta.

Well, it's been a very long time coming, but a title has finally arrived that really nails what Marvel's *Punisher* is all about – punishment.

Dual wielding his trademark .45s, knives and interrogation methods, not to mention the meanest attitude seen this side of the A-Team, Castle clean ups the streets of the Big Apple whilst avenging the murders of his family.

KILLING TIME

In between the bouts of carnage, *The Punisher*'s occasional flashes of gallows humour shine through the sombre story. Castle's one screwed up guy, tormented by flashbacks. Some of his one-liners are top-drawer, though, meaning you'll always be rooting for the big fella no matter how outside of the law he operates.

Volition have ensured that the Marvel license has been pumped to the max, so expect to see memorable cameos with superheroes like Iron Man, Nick Fury, and The Kingpin.

But be warned – this game is hardcore. Compared to the pain you'll be dealing out in *The Punisher*, former shock-fests such as *Manhunt* and *Soldier of Fortune* seem as threatening as an episode of the *Teletubbies*. If the violence on offer wasn't already extreme enough, simply tap the triangle button to enter fully-fledged slaughter mode. Castle pulls out his knives and the real fun begins, with a *Max Payne*-style killing spree being the order of the day.

But it's not all killing, killing, killing. Well, okay... it is, but the carnage varies nicely from one mission to another. There are escort missions, sniper levels, bomb-defusing malarkey as well as some memorable boss encounters. Take, for example, an amusing encounter with Marvel bad guy, the Russian, in Castle's apartment. You'll never look at piggy-back rides the same way again.

Speaking of nasties, from street hoodlums to Japanese Yakuza, during our time with *The Punisher* we encountered some of the nastiest pieces of work New York could throw at us.

GRAVE DECISION

As missions progress, it's not possible to mindlessly blast your way through a level. Oh no - these sneaky S.O.Bs start wearing Kevlar, meaning only direct head shots or handy knife work will get the job done. Luckily there are also Uzis, automatic rifles and other armaments to help you send these guys to an early grave as they come at you with their endless range of grunts and profanities.

Watch out for this one: it'll create headlines. Let's hope some are in games mags. GM

"THE PUNISHER MAKES SHOCK-FESTS SUCH AS MANHUNT SEEM AS THREATENING AS TELETUBBIES"

Frank does his best *Solid Snake* impression.

The Rhino fatality in this level will give you the horn.

SPECIAL INTERROGATIONS

Once of the best bits in the Punisher's festival of depravity is the 'special interrogation' feature. Every once in a while the opportunity arises to use part of a level's scenery to help 'persuade' some unlucky heavy to cough up valuable titbits of info.

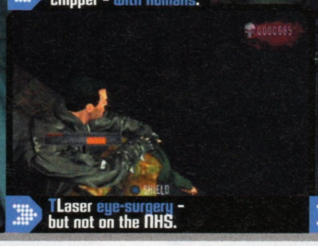
Cracking skulls on glass panes.

Feeding-time at the piranha tank.

Loading up the wood chipper – with humans.

NEW SHOTS

Neck saw.


Laser eye-surgery – but not on the NHS.

Going for a swim in the river.

THE HORROR!

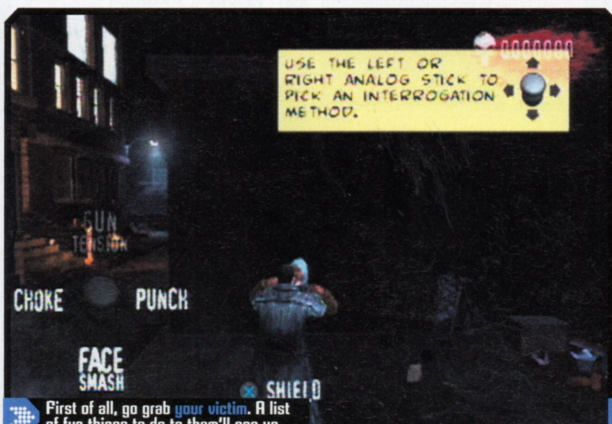
The Punisher's not all gore and carnage though, also being chock full of goodies to unlock as you maim and slaughter your way through the game. Classy gaming techniques, from protecting innocent civilians to maiming baddies with combos, are all rewarded by those kind chaps at Volition. From trailers for the recent (godawful) *Punisher* movie, to comic covers, news clippings from each level and replays of your favourite scenes from the game, there's always something new to unlock in this violent fun fest.

The New York press don't seem to like poor old Castle much.

The real meat of the game - the armoury screen. Check out the guns!

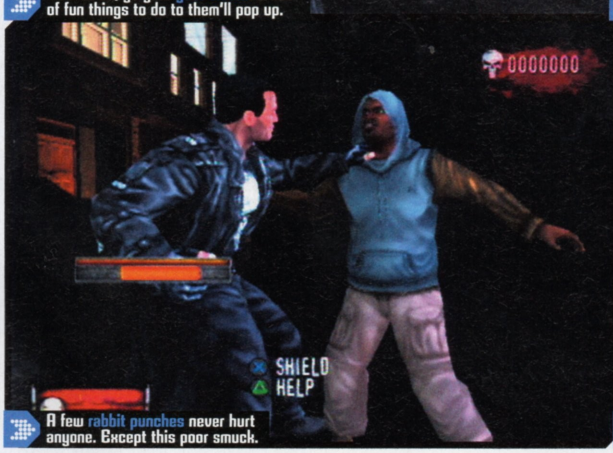
SHOW SOME RESPECT

Since the Special Interrogation option only crops up every so often, what then - I hear you ask - happens when there's no handy sausage-making machine in sight? Don't fret, the ever resourceful Castle resorts to using more traditional methods of extracting info. This involves cornering a hood and using a selection of nasty punches, holds and smashes to get the required results.



First of all, go grab your victim. A list of fun things to do to them'll pop up.

A face smash will knock some sense into them.



A few rabbit punches never hurt anyone. Except this poor smuck.

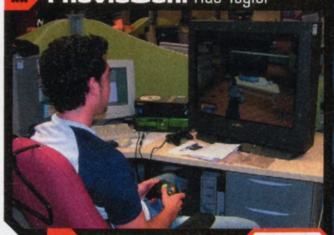
This method of interrogation is called Gun Tension.

HANDS ON VERDICT

THE PUNISHER

HOW FINISHED? 25%

PREVIEWER: Rob Taylor



CONTROLS

- ⊗ - GRAB
- ○ - QUICK EXECUTION
- □ - CHANGE WEAPON
- R1 - SHOOT
- ← - MOVE
- → - CHANGE CAMERA

WE PLAYED IT AT...

GM Headquarters

WHAT WE PLAYED

- Punishment mode
- 25% single player
- Online play
- The co-op mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Fluidly and effortlessly. Just pick up a pad and start shooting. The use of analogue for interrogation is especially innovative. Early on, the bad guys crack easily. Later on though, it's a different story.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The AI is hardly ground-breaking and enemies will do some really dumb things at times. Also, if we're being really critical, it's largely unoriginal. It plays so well though we'll forgive Volition this time.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The totally gruesome and downright sick special interrogations! You'll wince – we certainly did!

GM VERDICT

OUR GM LOVES

- + The style
- + The executions - sorry, interrogations
- + Frank Castle - our hero

GM HATES

- - The repetition
- - The hackneyed plot
- - The inhumanity

MOST WANTED METER

If you dug *Manhunt* and *The Suffering*, chances are you'll love this. The violence isn't easy on the eye, though.

8.2

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE:...Manhunt (PS2, XB), The Suffering (PS2, XB)
BIGGEST RIVAL:.....Manhunt
OUT SOONER:.....Viewtiful Joe 2!

• OUT: MARCH • FORMATS: PC • PRICE: £34.99 • DEVELOPER: IRRATIONAL • PUBLISHER: DIGITAL JESTERS • ONLINE: CO-OP • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CONTACT: 01707 871516 • PLAYERS: 1-4

PCCD

FREEDOM FORCE VS. THE THIRD REICH

And the winner of catchiest game title of 2005 goes to...

Has it really been more than two years since the loveable assortment of *Freedom Force*'s heroes last lit up our monitors? The sleeper hit of 2002 went down with the PC crowd better than pink spandex trousers in a disco, and now the rag tag team of do-gooders have returned to save the world from the dastardly overtures of evil once more. Phew.

Perhaps the most refreshing thing about the *Freedom Force* universe is that developers Irrational are unburdened by any official licence, meaning originality and creativity flow from every pore of this title. One glimpse of the superhero roster in the demo was enough to get us wetting our pants in anticipation, with hero Sky King and Brit spy Blackjack looking especially groovy.

Plot-wise, *FF2* looks set to be a corker, mixing two well-loved themes: Nazis and time travel. With a story that flits between the 1940s and 1960s, encompassing characters from each era, action and laughs should flow thick and fast.

One of the most improved gameplay elements is character AI, so intense micro-management of your squad is no longer necessary. For instance, stronger characters like Minute Man will rush into close-quarters combat, while the brains of the outfit, Mentor, will hang back and work his magic from afar. This'll hopefully resolve one of the rare criticisms aimed at the original, where at times we felt we needed to be superheroes ourselves to keep up with the frenetic pace.

With a rumoured *Freedom Force* comic in the offing, the time may have come for this cult fave to make the step up to mainstream popularity. Could Sky King be the next Buzz Lightyear? We wouldn't bet against it. GM

Need to Know

What is it?

The most side-splitting superhero fare since The Incredibles, and a sequel to one of the most original titles in years. A strange tongue-in-cheek hybrid of strategy, RPG and action genres – it's nevertheless more fun to look at and play with than Halle Berry's Catwoman.

Facts

- Entirely new game engine boasting dynamic lighting, impressive new destructible building effects and tons of flashy superhero powers
- More heroes to control than ever before – six, to be precise
- Create your own hero! Dress them, name them and power them up
- Overhauled multi-player mode so you can continue to save the world online with your mates

Rumour

El Diablo is an ex-member of 70s disco phenomenon The Village People.

From the People who made...

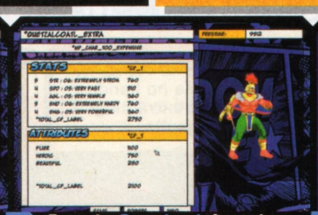
Freedom Force 84%
System Shock 2 ..... 90%

What superhero game would be complete without the requisite 'brain in a jar' alien baddies? *Freedom Force* doesn't disappoint.

GRAND DESIGNS

Customisation is the name of the game in *Freedom Force Vs. the Third Reich*, so don't be afraid to camp it up when designing your new superhero!

Boris Bashemup sounds like an apt name for this colossal Cossack.



Try saying Quetzalcoatl after a pint or three. We tried it, and it's hard.

After empowering your heroes you can select individual special effects.

Import your new hero into a game and find out if they're a Superman or not.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

Freedom Force 2's new game engine looks beautifully polished. At the beginning of the demo, we decided to test Quetzalcoatl's super strength. Having ripped the nearest street lamp from the ground, everything suddenly went dark!

Some of the new spruced-up superpower effects are very classy.

What's the point of being really strong if you can't smash stuff up?

Those lighting effects are really... illuminating. And check out El Diablo's flaming fists.

Bang! Crack! Pow! Adam West and Burt Ward eat your hearts out.

Minute Man's exquisitely textured chin makes him a natural leader.

Rob Earnshaw-alike slaphead Mentor looks better than ever for 2005.

HANDS ON VERDICT

FREEDOM FORCE VS. THE 3RD REICH

HOW FINISHED? 70%

PREVIEWER: Rob Taylor

CONTROLS PCCD

LEFT CLICK: MOVE.
RIGHT CLICK: SUPERHERO MENU.

WE PLAYED IT IN...

The *GM* bunker

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] An incomplete section of the single-player demo mission.
- [x] Online play
- [x] The co-op mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Remarkably similar to the original – which is definitely a good thing in our book. Most missions will involve both primary and optional secondary objectives, so there's always something interesting to do. Pointer arrows keep you on the right track so getting lost in the huge levels is rarely a problem.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Even with the obviously enhanced AI, controlling all four squad members in a heated encounter can be fiddly at times.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The puerile insults like 'baldie' and 'thicko' spilling from our heroes' mouths are pure class.

VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ Those loveable heroes!
+ Those dastardly villains!
+ Their snazzy outfits

GM HATES

- Some annoying gaps in the AI – but then this is only a demo.
- The plain visuals

MOST WANTED METER

This little marvel is definitely shaping up to be one of the most rewarding PC experiences of 2005. We look forward to the finished article.

8.2

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....Neverwinter Nights (PC)
OUT SOONER: .....City of Heroes, February

OUTLAW GOLF 2™

TEEING OFF
JANUARY 2005

ONLINE

Online action for the PS2 and XBOX - up to four players can compete online - Xbox features online leader boards

GAMEPLAY

10 over-the-top playable characters from the Outlaw universe playing on 8 new extreme courses

FIGHTING

Features a fighting system that lets you beat up your caddie and an all new golf cart racing minigame

16+ www.pegi.info

PlayStation 2

XBOX

XBOX LIVE ONLINE ENABLED

HYPNOTIX

MTV GAMES

GS GLOBAL STAR SOFTWARE

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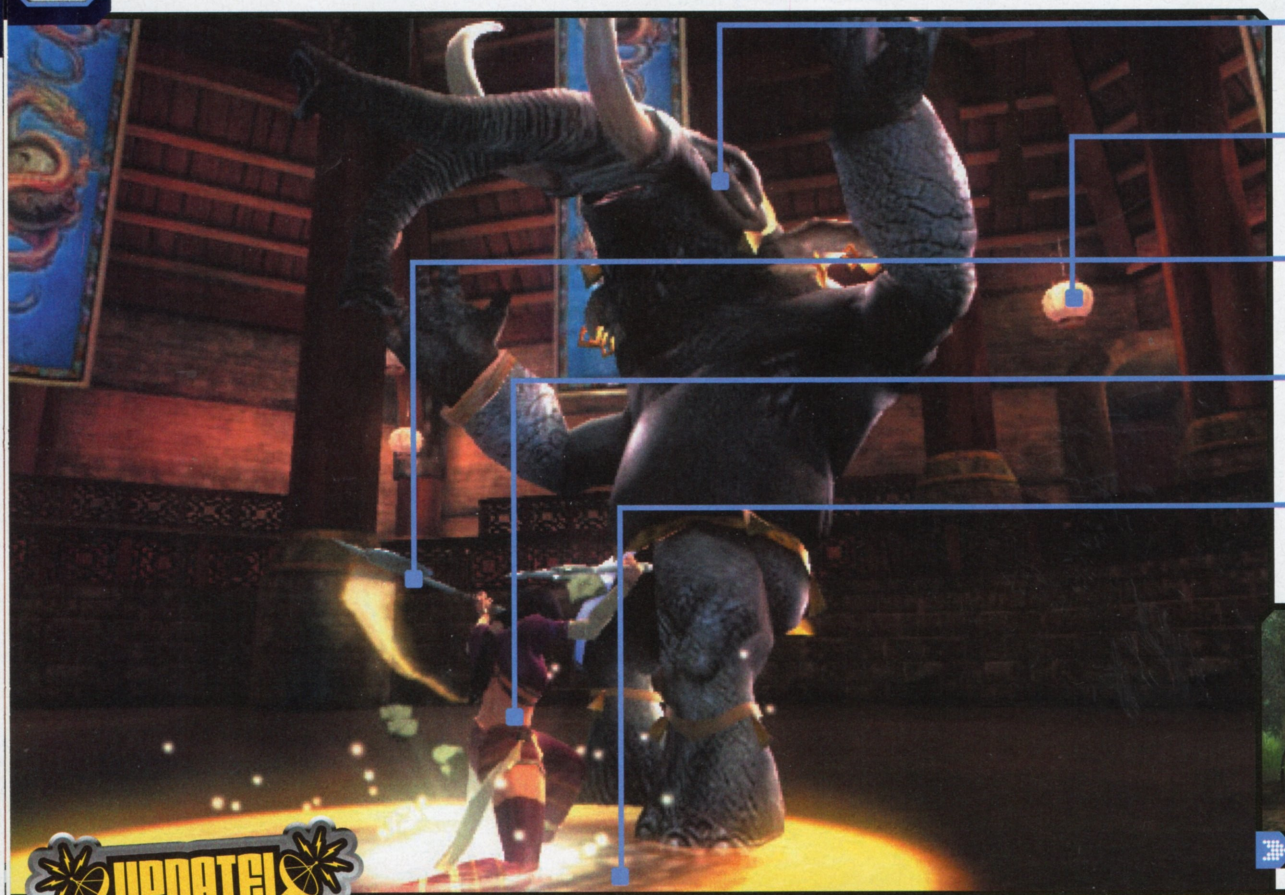
• OUT: MARCH • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: BIOWARE • PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT • ONLINE: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 0870 601 0100 • PLAYERS: 1



BEASTLY
Fight giant demons inspired by creatures and gods from ancient Chinese mythology. Or get the police onto them for being 'trunk and disorderly.' Geddit? Eh? Eh? Oh.

ORI-MENTAL
Jade Empire is inspired by the land of ancient China rather than actually being set there, but you'll still find lots of references to Oriental myth, legend and decoration.

STEELY
Your main weapons are hands and fists, but for those extra tough encounters you'll want to break out the heavy metal. Swords, staffs, axes and knives are all available.

GIRL POWER
There's no sex discrimination in this game. Two of the playable characters are ladies and they're just as hard as the blokes, and considerably better looking.

SPELL IT
Just like in *Fable*, the key to pulverising opponents is the combination of magic and melee attacks. Chain them together with some good blocking and inflict devastating damage.

Listen toad face, you dance the foxtrot like this. I saw it on *Strictly Come Dancing*.

UPDATE!

WE VISIT BIOWARE'S OFFICES IN CANADA FOR A PLAYTEST OF THEIR KUNG FU RPG

JADE EMPIRE

Chop to it – there's big trouble in little China...

Need to know!

What is it?

BioWare's follow up to the original Knights Of The Old Republic is billed as a martial arts action RPG set in a mystical land.

Facts

- Play as one of six butt-kicking characters
- Learn up to 18 different martial arts styles and spells
- Battle myriad fantastical monsters, ghosts and demons
- Choose your own path through the game

Rumour

- You can pilot a mechanical dragonfly

From the People who made...

Knights Of The Old Republic 93%
Baldur's Gate 2 .....88%

BLOCK IT!

The key to success in combat is blocking. When fighting, continuously hold down the B button to fend off your opponent's lesser blows, then pile in when they drop their guard.

When there's several hoodlums to face, blocking is doubly important.

Some attacks are just too powerful to thwart. Get dodging.

Jade Empire **is very much a case of 'what's not to like?', this being the second Xbox title from the developers of** *KOTOR*. **For one it plays in very similar fashion to the** *Star Wars* **classic, but with real-time martial arts and magical combat replacing turn-based light sabre shenanigans. And for two, it's broadly inspired by some of the highlights of Oriental cinema, such as** *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* **and** *Hero*. **See, what's not to like?!**

HIGH KICKS

Once you've selected your character and been introduced to the mystical world where you live (which is absolutely stunning - a riot of colour, intricate Far Eastern design and lovely soft-focus lighting), it's straight into the action. You'll start out with just two fighting styles, one melee and one magical, and each can be allocated a slot on the D-pad, allowing you to swap between them easily during fights.

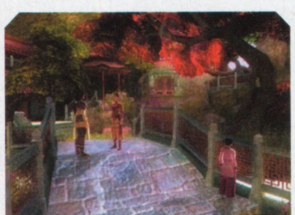
More ways of dishing out punishment will become available as the game progresses, either by parting with your cash, learning from a master or defeating skilled opponents. Combining the styles is the key to success game, and scrapping is as much about tactical thinking as it is sharp reflexes.

"SCRAPPING IS AS MUCH ABOUT TACTICAL THINKING AS REFLEXES"

ANCIENT ARTS

The 'wahey, I'm Jet Li!' combat is definitely the game's big pull, but it also bares all the finer hallmarks of *KOTOR*. Multiple dialogue options and gameplay choices give you the option to be an absolute swine or a noble hero and your alignment will have a direct bearing on how others treat you in the game world. The story seems to be a corker too and with over 300 different NPC characters to meet, greet or slap around, you won't be short of company on your travels. *Jade Empire* is set to be the absolute business and we can't wait. GM

This is Two Rivers, the little peasant village you call home.



The girl on the right is Dawn Star and she's one of your followers.

Scholar Li is another of the female characters. Nice stance.

A quiet night in this lakeside town. Hmm, too quiet wethinks.

SPELLS GOOD

If your knuckles are feeling a little bruised from all that Kung Fu slippery and your tootsies are in need of a nice warm foot spa, why not revert to magic instead?

Ice to see you! You really need an Arnie voice for that line.

You'll have to eat lots of Chop Suey to pull off the Party Whirlwind attack

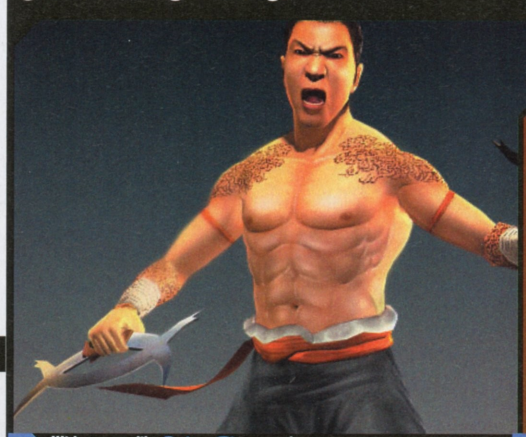
The strength of the spell you casts depends on how strong your Chi is.

Summon a dragon to breathe fire on your foes. How cool is that?

CHARACTER CLASS

Unlike BioWare's previous title *KOTOR*, where there are plenty of options to create a unique character, in *Jade Empire* there are only six specific martial artists to choose from. Why so? BioWare tell us that they want the character models to remain at as high a resolution as possible for the entire game. Allowing players to tweak everything from robes and boots means your on-screen persona will suffer in the looks department, and you've got to look your best when battling the demonic hordes, eh? Not that this really matters, the six are very different in appearance. It's up to you to shape their personalities through the actions and conversations you make throughout the game.

NEW SHOTS



With a name like Furious Ming, people won't mess with you down the pub.

This guy is called Death's Hand and he's chief baddie, not a playable character

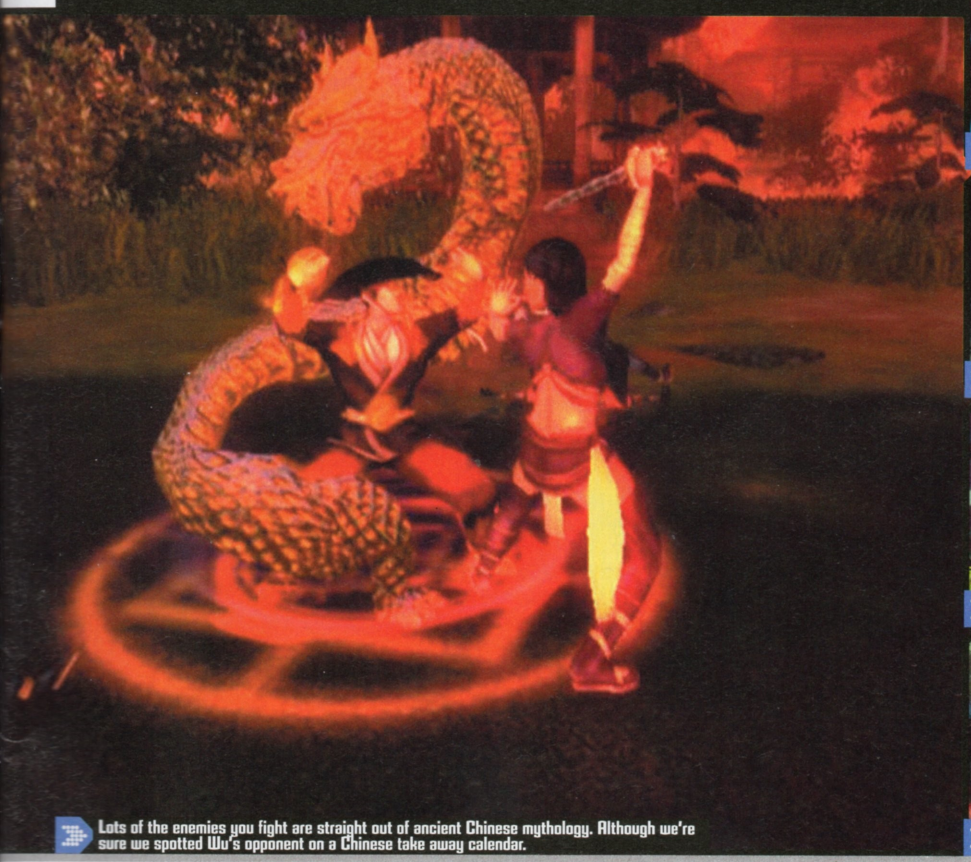
Bet you can't guess why we chose to play as foxy Wu The Lotus Blossom when we got our hands on the game!

LUSH LOTUS!

As we say in Bath!

CREATURE DISCOMFORTS

The world of *Jade Empire* is inhabited by a menagerie of weird and wonderful beasts and demons. And a lot of unpleasant bandits and thugs, but they're not as nice to look as, eh?



Lots of the enemies you fight are straight out of ancient Chinese mythology. Although we're sure we spotted Wu's opponent on a Chinese take away calendar.

Is it a man? Is it a lion? Is it a ram? No, it's RamLionMan!

The unpleasant fellas are called Cannibals, but where's the stew?

That's what happens when you wear skimpy clothes - people get the horn!

Defeat a new type of enemy and you'll be able to transform into them.

HANDS ON VERDICT

HOW FINISHED? 100%

PREVIEWER: Nick Ellis

CONTROLS

- A - ATTACK
- Y - FOCUS MODE
- X - SPECIAL ATTACK
- B - BLOCK
- R - CYCLE TARGET RIGHT
- L - CYCLE TARGET LEFT
- ↓ - ASSIGN ATTACKS

WE PLAYED IT AT...

BioWare's HQ, Edmonton

WHAT WE PLAYED

- ☑ The opening two hours As Wu The Lotus Blossom
- ☑ Protected our village

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Imagine *KOTOR* and *Tekken* meeting *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Then factor in some spellcraft and demonic animals and you're almost there. Glorious backdrops and motion-captured character animation make it a pleasure to play.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The tactical thinking required during combat wasn't explained properly. A tutorial would help.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Getting your first weapon then wrapping it around the heads of a bandit raiding party.

VERDICT

GM LOVES

- + The beautiful settings
- + Elephant demons
- + Real-time Kung Fu

GM HATES

- - Having to travel to BioWare's office on the world's smallest plane

MOST WANTED METER

A wicked variety of martial arts styles and an intriguing story means we should have another classic RPG on our hands.

9/10

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: ..... KOTOR
BIGGEST RIVAL: Final Fantasy 11
OUT SOONER: ..... KOTOR 2, 93% February

• OUT: MARCH • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
• ONLINE: CO-OP • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, PC • CALL: 01932 838 230 • PLAYERS: 1-4

PS2 XBOX PC CD

BEHIND YOU! Stealthy Sam Fisher stars

BLADE
Sam Fisher's new blade comes in useful for all sorts – particularly silently slaying unaware enemies.

TIP TOE
As before, noise and light meters show how hidden you are. Make too much noise and they'll turn around.

LIT UP
The lighting effects were superb in the previous games, but *Chaos Theory* hits a whole new level.

All of the gameplay that makes *Splinter Cell* totally compelling is back and better than ever.

UPDATE!

FIRST PREVIEWED IN GM151. NOW MORE LEVELS ARE PLAYABLE

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

Sam Fisher is back! And he's got a knife!

Need to Know

What is it?

Sam Fisher's third outing, combining the traditional stealth gameplay with some innovative gadgetry and a classic Tom Clancy story.

Facts

- Now with co-operative play, both online and off
- Some missions have multiple paths
- Sam's gun can be equipped with four different attachments
- He's got a knife, for slashing people

Rumour

- This could be Fisher's final outing

From the People who made...

Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow 84%
Splinter Cell.....90%

A butterfly flaps its wings in Japan and causes a tornado in Florida. That's the basic principle of chaos theory, and the developers of the third *Splinter Cell* game insist that it is more than merely a name, with minor decisions affecting the bigger picture.

For instance, if Sam Fisher decides to pick a lock, find the relevant documents, shin down the drainpipe and escape unseen, he saves the world. However, should he decide to break that lock, a guard might spot it, revive his felled colleague and raise the alarm; Fisher gets caught and the Earth dies screaming.

These decisions will have to be made during a geopolitical adventure thriller that spans the globe, beginning with the kidnap of computer engineer Bruce Morganholt by a Peruvian guerrilla organisation, the People's Voice. It's not really the type of gig that Fisher gets out of bed for, but Morganholt has information that must not fall into the wrong hands. So, our Sam finds himself bound for the Peruvian coast. Turns out he's too late: the hostage has been tortured to death, and the kidnapper has fled aboard a cargo ship. This provides an example of one of the game's different approaches with different decisions to be made.

Further missions include breaking into a Panamanian offshore bank, in order to access records to find out who paid for the kidnapping. This requires Sam to make it look like a robbery by making off with 50 million dollars worth of French governmental bonds. From there, he finds himself back on U.S soil, where the power has been cut from the entire Eastern seaboard. Sam has to sneak into Manhattan and put 50 pence in the meter.

While the missions vary from multi-pathed to completely linear, the core emphasis is still on stealth. Sam will inevitably get his hands dirty, but the idea is to pick your fights carefully to avoid being caught with your pants down. To this end, Sam is equipped with a host of new gadgets and weapons. For instance, a sticky camera can be used to spy on enemies, and grenades emit a deadly gas. And he's not lacking more traditional firepower, with the trusty SC-20K coming with four different attachments, including sniper and shotgun.

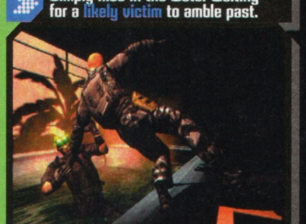
With the developers claiming that it will be the best-looking PS2 game ever produced, and a slew of online options on all formats, there's plenty to look forward to. Fisher may be reaching retirement, but there's life in the old dog yet. GM

"SAM WILL GET HIS HANDS DIRTY BUT THE IDEA IS TO PICK YOUR FIGHTS CAREFULLY TO AVOID BEING CAUGHT"

EAU YES

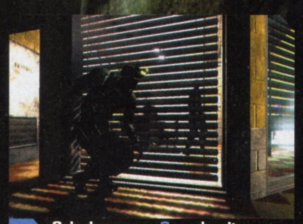
Among the new moves is the ability to drag a man under water and drown him like a cat in a bag. And while he's breathing his last, you can admire the highly impressive water effects.

Simply hide in the water waiting for a likely victim to amble past.



Drag him into the drink and stand on him until he stops twitching.

The flick of a switch gives you the time-honoured night vision.



Nobody can see Sam, despite three headlamps on his helmet.

Is this bloke is about to be caught surfing 'specialist websites'?

WORLD V YOU

The Versus mode sees two mercenaries going up against two spies in a series of online missions. The spies play in third-person, but mercenaries can use a first person mode.

Sam's pretty conspicuous at the moment, but that'll change...

Activating his new camo suit makes him start to disappear.

Unfortunately like before, mercs will be able to detect usage.

You can't help but feel invincible with it activated though.

We predict very bad things for this hapless berk's immediate future.

It's a romantic night, but he's about to get his neck snapped.

You need eyes in the back of your head when Fisher's about.

KNEES UP

One of Sam Fisher's new moves is the ability to stroll up to an opponent and knee him squarely in the guts. This winds him and causes him to fall to the ground, pleading for mercy. We can't imagine why he didn't think of this cunning move before.

"I'm very sorry, but I'm going to have to hurt you."

Catch him in the right spot and he'll go down like a sack of spuds.

With the enemy felled, you are free to go about your stealth business.

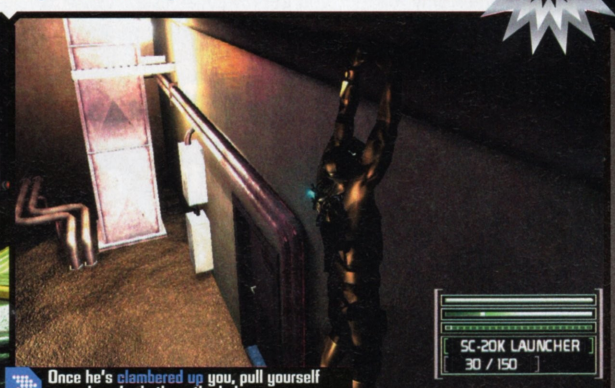
COOPERATION STREET

EXCLUSIVE SHOTS!

The co-op mode sees two players attempting missions together, either communicating via headsets online, or if they're sat in the same room, by barking orders in each other's ears. Try these cunning manoeuvres...

Ledge too high? One of you is going to have to give the other a bunk-up.

Now hang on the ledge while your buddy climbs up your body.



Once he's clambered up you, pull yourself up and you're both on the ledge.

NEW SHOTS

For higher areas you'll need to jump. Again, one of you gives a bunk-up.

A throw and jump should see you launched into the air.

Once you're up, you might want to give your mate a hand.

HANDS ON VERDICT

SPLINTER CELL CHAOS THEORY

HOW FINISHED? 30+

PREVIEWER: Steve Hill

CONTROLS

- A - RELOAD
- Y - JUMP
- X - DRAW WEAPON
- B - CROUCH/ROLL
- R - SHOOT/KILL
- L - INCAPACITATE

WE PLAYED IT AT...

Ubisoft Montreal

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] Versus mode
- [x] Co-op mode
- [x] Single-player
- [x] Online mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

The Versus mode is very different depending if you're playing as a mercenary or a spy, with the latter forced to skulk around in the shadows. As for Co-op, the collaborative moves are great fun, although less so if you've got a German bloke sat next to you telling you what to do.

ANY PROBLEMS?

We reckon much of the gameplay will involve skulking around in a largely linear fashion.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Giving your mate a bunk-up in the co-op mode, or dragging an enemy into an pond and drowning him.

VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ The PS2 graphics
+ The fact that the tedious cut scenes have been removed

GM HATES

- Getting discovered sneaking about
- Spending the entire game in the dark

MOST WANTED METER

Ubisoft aren't attempting to fix what wasn't broken. The new gadgets add a further dimension though, and online gamers will be in for a treat.

92%

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow (PS2), 84%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Metal Gear Solid: Snake Eater, 95%

- OUT: 11TH FEBRUARY
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £29.99
- DEVELOPER: CYBERLORE STUDIOS
- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- SPECIAL: NONE
- OTHER FORMATS: XB, PC
- CALL: 01932 838230
- PLAYERS: 1

SNAP HAPPY

There are no points for creativity when you take photos of the girls for the magazine, although you do get to select what they wear (or don't wear).

Plonk your model where you want the photo-shoot to take place.

They're professionals so they strike raunchy poses. Excellent.

Put that sofa you've just bought to good use in your photo-shoot.

Hitting triangle makes your model change poses for the perfect shot.

LIVING THE DREAM

Admittedly, *Playboy* is fairly dumbed down on the surface, but there's still a lot to do, which extends the lifespan of the game slightly. For example, you need to build Hugh's fame so he has more celebrity friends and girlfriends, which have a knock-on effect on the success of the mag.

On the staff roster screen you can hire and fire staff, including bunnies.

Groping the girls doesn't normally have a negative effect on your relationships.

NEW SHOTS!

As you make more money from the mag you can buy more furnishings.

Social interactions includes offering girls contracts to work for you.

But to start with, you have fairly limited resources for the mag.

PLAYBOY: THE MANSION

A game with cute bunnies – and it isn't Watership Down...

Try to imagine a *Sims* game but with parties where instead of whinging about the lack of food and buggering off home, your guests get drunk, strip off, then queue up to 'make out' with you. Instead of Bella Goth banging on your door, Carmen Electra turns up. In a bikini. And she's only too willing to take it off (well, the top half anyway) and be photographed.

If this sounds like the best thing ever to you, you just might appreciate playing as Hugh Hefner in *Playboy: The Mansion*.

PLAY TIME

Similarly to *Bustin' Out*, you progress through the game by completing goals. This includes setting up an office to publish the magazine and hiring a journalist (lady-charming Hugh has a magazine to run too, you know). Later on, objectives get trickier – keeping four girlfriends happy at once? That's a difficult task right there.

You can decorate your Playboy mansion however you see fit. The game also allows you to stage a photo-shoot in any part of the mansion. So, you get lovely ladies draping themselves over your leather couch and your love rug (matron). To make a lady agree to taking part in a shoot, you first have to build up a relationship with her. Girls with lower stats (mingers) are easy to persuade, but your Natalie Denning's require a bit more schmoozing. It's worth it when the issue they're centrefold in sells millions, though.

It's got none of the charm of *The Sims*, but if the charms of a pixelated Carmen Electra appeal to you, *Playboy: The Mansion* might just be the game for you.

Need to Know

What is it?

The Sims with smut - you play as a young Hugh Hefner as he builds up his Playboy Empire and act as photographer taking pictures of glamour girls.

Facts

- It features an array of real Playboy models, including Carmen Electra
- You can do all sorts of typical Hugh things, like host lingerie parties
- 12 campaigns to get through
- Free Play version where there are no objectives, just the chance to play around as Hugh

Rumour

- Unlockable nude versions of the girls

From the People who made...

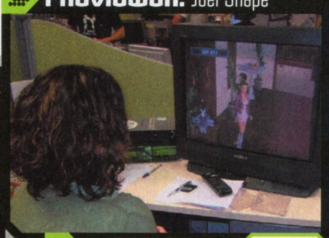
Risk: Global Domination ..... N/A
MechWarrior 4 ..... N/A

HANDS ON VERDICT

PLAYBOY THE MANSION

HOW FINISHED? 202

PREVIEWER: Joel Snape



CONTROLS

- INTERACT
- FREE CURSOR MODE
- VIEW RELATIONSHIP SCREEN
- VIEW PLAYBOY MAGAZINE SCREEN
- VIEW HEFNER SCREEN
- VIEW MANSION SCREEN

WE PLAYED IT AT...

The GM mansion

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] Mission mode
- [x] Free play mode
- [x] Extras
- [x] All 12 campaigns

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Playboy **seems to be little more than *The Sims* with bad controls and semi-nudity. Nothing is done outstandingly well. Things look up a bit further into the game as missions get more challenging, but living in the *Playboy Mansion* isn't as much fun as you'd imagine.**

ANY PROBLEMS?

Photo-shoots are repetitive, and the picture quality has no bearing on your magazine sales.

BEST BIT SO FAR

Goals are very varied, including fixing the relationship problems of your 'Bunnies'.

VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ Persuading lovelies to get their kit off
+ Putting together a best-selling magazine

GM HATES
- The clunky control system
- The nudity isn't even remotely sexy

MOST WANTED METER

It feels a lot like a more rubbish version of *The Sims*, although the mission structure might be its only saving grace.

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: .....The Sims: Bustin' Out (PS2, XB, GC)
WAIT FOR: ..Singles: Threesomes May

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• ONLINE: DEATHMATCH • OTHER FORMATS: PC, PS2 • WEBSITE: WWW.LUCASARTS.COM • PLAYERS: 1-4

XBOX PCCD

HUDS UP

You've also got a choice between Fisher-esque night vision or this tactical HUD that keeps track of objectives and team-mates...

LETHAL

Your rifle can convert to sniper and demolition modes. You also pick a wrist-mounted vibro-knife for those up close 'n' personal situations.

WIPE OUT

But best of all is the little windscreen wiper that pops up whenever you've got blood or oil on the visor. It's like your own personal traffic-light hobo!

The night vision's very *Splinter Cell* - it's not all that useful, though.

UPDATE! OUR MOST COMPLETE PREVIEW YET BEFORE NEXT MONTH'S REVIEW

STAR WARS: REPUBLIC COMMANDO

But are they really going commando?

Beardy Alec Guiness murmured "Only Stormtroopers are so accurate" as he stumbles across a decimated Tattooine village with little Luke Skywalker. Which is absolute toss – most stormtroopers couldn't hit Jabba The Hutt with a repeating blaster, and one shin-kick from an Ewok's enough to put them in traction for months. But that's all about to change. You play as a Republic Commando, the toughest of the tough in the Temuera-Morrison-faced clone army, and the Ewoks had better stay back.

Set somewhere between Episodes 1 and 2, *Republic Commando* kicks off with you battling Droid Separatists – but with Dooku and Grievous on the scene, there's no guarantee that you'll be on the good guys' side by the time the closing credits have rolled.

RC's big hook is its effortless squad-based command. This isn't *Full Spectrum Warrior* – it's one-touch, assign 'n' forget stuff with the emphasis firmly on keeping the action going. And it certainly does go – the game's best set-pieces feature Federation fighters swooping overhead as you charge in with your four-man crew, taking down hordes of robots amid a storm of laser fire. Rolling battle-bot things chug in at full speed, and take some serious teamwork – or a handy stash of electro-grenades – to take down. For the devoted *Star Wars* enthusiast, it's also the first time you'll be able to get a glimpse of Wookie planet Kashyyyk prior to its upcoming appearance in Episode 3. Roooargh, eh?

The action takes on a familiar pattern: you're confronted by a wide open space with a switch, terminal or generator at the end. So then you tell one of the boys to go deal with it, dozens of bad things 'ambush' him, you kill them – and then it's on to the next bit.

Another tactical oversight's the healing system. Bacta Pods are scattered throughout the levels, offering unlimited health juice for anyone who can get to them. As in *Ghost Recon*, you can also heal incapacitated team-mates, or tell them to heal each other – no health packs required. The kicker is, though, that they can also heal you, turning entire sections into games of injury-tag as your boys get mown down while you patch each other up. It's still pretty tough, but we waded through the first few levels easily with some sound tactical planning. Now, if we can just get our hands on Samuel L. Jackson...

GM

"THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU'LL BE ON THE GOOD GUYS SIDE BY THE TIME THE CREDITS ROLL"

Need To Know

What is it?

Rainbow Six - but with the clone troopers from Star Wars.

Facts

- 12 weapons.
- 14 missions, set over three campaigns.
- 16 players over Xbox Live or GameSpy

Rumour

You'll meet Anakin in his Darth Vader getup...

From the People who made...

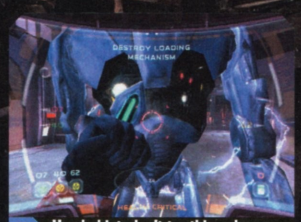
Star Wars: Battlefront.....82%

TEN-HUT!

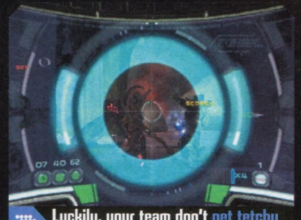
Let's get this straight – you're not just any old clone trooper. You're part of an elite, four-man, colour-coded squad who'll do anything you tell them. They're big on following orders and short on common sense, so – hey! – why not get them to do all the dirty work? You know it makes sense...

They'll breach doors - better than just opening them.

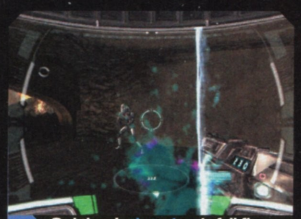
And they'll take forward positions for sniping or grenade-lobbing.



Handy hint: don't try this unless you're *sure* the bot's stunned.



Luckily, your team don't get tetchy if you shoot them by mistake.



And there's that wiper in full flow. Blood, oil - it doesn't matter.

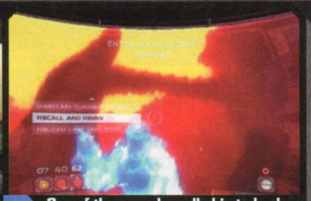
LARRY, CURLEY AND MOE

You'd expect your squad of clones to have the same personality – but you couldn't be more wrong.

07 is the bloodthirsty one. He enjoys sniping, football and moonlit walks.

64 – or 'Pixer' – is your man for 'slicing' terminals.

'Scorch' does demolitions. He likes blowing things up and holding hands .



Any of them can be called in to heal you when you're incapacitated.

If you can weather the incoming fire, the melee attack's incredibly effective - it takes out the basic droids in one (slightly messy) punch.

EVERYBODY LOVES A CLONE...

Just imagine - you've only got three mates, and they all look like the surly bloke from *Once Were Warriors*. Going to clubs wouldn't be all that exciting, but at least you form a tight-knit murderising unit...

Covering your boys as they scramble to unlock doors is a recurring theme.

Later on, it's vital to help your lads out with a quick jolt of Bacta-juice.

The 'assign target' command works best on shielded enemies – everybody in the hizzouse goes bullet crazy on their ass.

One of our favourite tactics is setting one bloke up in a turret, then charging in to lure the bad guys out.

'Form up's the one for when you can't remember where everyone's gone.

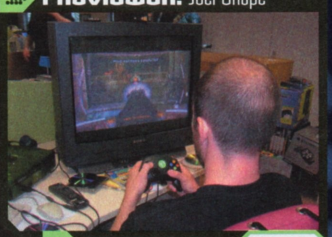
And 'Search And Destroy' is just the ticket for getting everyone killed.

HANDS ON VERDICT

STAR WARS REPUBLIC COMMANDO

HOW FINISHED? 30h

PREVIEWER: Joel Snape



CONTROLS

- A - GIVE ORDER
- Y - JUMP
- X - MELEE ATTACK
- B - CROUCH
- R - FIRE
- L - THROW GRNADE
- CYCLE GRENADES
- CYCLE VISION MODES

WE PLAYED IT AT...

The *GM* barracks

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] Entire first campaign
- [x] Split-screen Deathmatch
- [x] Co-op mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Good fun, although it might be a bit simplistic - all you need to do is scoot into a new area, click on the various sniping points to 'assign' goons to them, then forget about the squad and carry on shooting.

ANY PROBLEMS?

Only the repetitiveness - the hold-off-the-flying-things-while-a-trooper-overrides-the-controls sequences are repeated three or four times.

BEST BIT SO FAR

The fight against the spider-bot – assign the boys to 'distract' the bot by attacking it head-on.

VERDICT

GM LOVES

+ ...it when a plan comes together
+ Manning a turret while the boys charge in

GM HATES

- The banter between your 'elite' team-mates
- Constantly trekking back to the health points

MOST WANTED METER

A bit more tactical than the slightly disappointing Battlefront, this could be the best take on the military side of Star Wars yet.

8

CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: Full Spectrum Warrior, 85%
BIGGEST RIVAL: Ghost Recon 2, 85%

• OUT: 4TH FEBRUARY • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: IN HOUSE • PUBLISHER: EA
• ONLINE: CO-OP • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, GC, PC • CALL: 01932 450 000 • PLAYERS: 1-4

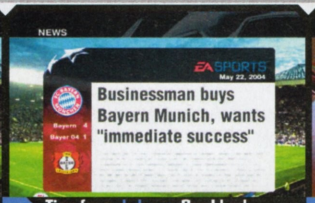
PS2 Portable2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE PC CD

ROMAN EMPIRE

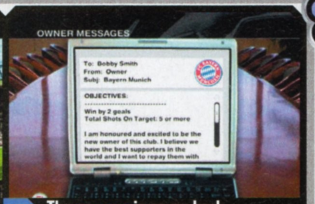
UEFA Champions League's main point of interest is its campaign mode, referred to affectionately in the *GM* office as the 'Abramovich mode'.

Whoops! My reign as Barca manager ends after one game.

A stint with Bayern gets off to a good start thanks to Pizarro.



Time for a shake up. Can I hack the pressure of a new chairman?



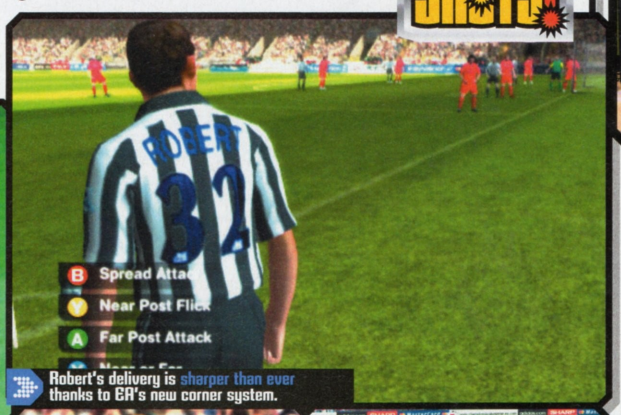
The new guy is on my back almost instantaneously.

LIVE THE DREAM...

Obviously, with the title *UEFA Champions League*, nobody is going to expect this game to focus upon the *Coca-Cola Championship*. However, all the top European Premier leagues are catered for as well as the *CL* itself, so there's plenty of variety on offer to help prolong interest. So whether you're into controlling a giant like Bayern Munich, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Ajax or Liverpool (or you simply wish to indulge your twisted European fantasies with Man City), *UEFA* will doubtless leave you with a soppy grin on your face.

NEW SHOTS

Stevie G's commitment to the Liverpool cause could never be questioned.



Robert's delivery is sharper than ever thanks to EA's new corner system.

Ronaldinho, one of the best players in the world, in all his glory.

Ballack's German efficiency causes havoc in the Leverkusen midfield.

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-05

No time for losers, 'cause EA are the champions, my friends...

The tussle for football gaming supremacy between giants EA and Konami has long since gone to extra time, with no victor emerging to dominate the market as of yet.

With this in mind, EA have attempted to revolutionise the whole football experience. Turning to the *UEFA Champions League* for inspiration, they've tried to instil this latest variant on the *FIFA* theme with more cinematic panache than *Lord of the Rings*. Nice idea lads, but what exactly does that mean?

Well, the fairytale goes that your fave club suddenly gets a new Roman Abramovich-like chairman. Complete objectives (e.g. win by a three goal margin) and Chelsea-esque amounts of riches will be on offer for you to boost your *Champions League* squad. Fail, and the big guy will come down harder on you than Duncan Ferguson's size 14s.

There are also plenty of bonus unlockables on offer if you make the grade. These include beach ball mode, 'Blindfold the ref' (anything goes in the tackle!) and invisible walls on the pitch, making for a frenetic experience akin to indoor footy.

From what we saw of the simulation side of the game, *UEFA* is superficial but fun. The transfer market, for instance, is simply a matter of clicking on any opposition player you like the look of. If you can afford the transfer fee and are riding high in the league or *Champions League* then chances are he'll come. If not, you'd better look elsewhere buddy. Gameplay-wise, the game looks sharp and plays almost as well as Cruyff's Barca side of the early '90s.

Boasting a combination of EA know-how and a tweaked version of the tried-and-tested *FIFA* engine, *UEFA* will surely be right up there come the end of the season. Looks like the championship just became a three-horse race.

If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs...

Italians rejoice as the Old Lady teaches the Reds a harsh lesson.

Manager and players celebrate thanks to EA's new split screen.

Need to Know!

What is it?

Footy specialists EA's new take on the beautiful game. Think of a combination of FIFA, Champ Man and a large dose of Footballers Wives.

Facts

- From the makers of the FIFA footy series, EA
- As much of an epic drama as a mere game of football
- Ultra professional commentary by Clive Tyldesley and Andy Gray
- Official Champions League licence for total authenticity

Rumour

- Abramovich's an unlockable character.

From the People who made...

FIFA 2005 ..... 81%
SSX 3 ..... 93%

HANDS ON VERDICT

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2004-2005

HOW FINISHED? 282

PREVIEWER: Rob Taylor

CONTROLS

- A - PASS/SWITCH PLAYER
- Y - NUDGE/THROUGH PASS
- X - TACKLE/LONG PASS
- R - TRIGGER - SPRINT
- B - SHOOT

WE PLAYED IT AT...

In the *GM* dug out.

WHAT WE PLAYED

- [x] 2 multi-player modes
- [x] 30% single player
- [x] Online play
- [x] The co-op mode

HOW DOES IT PLAY?

Think of a slightly tweaked *FIFA* engine with some new cinematic camera angles and a lick of *Champions League* gloss. In other words, pretty darn swish.

ANY PROBLEMS?

The in-game scenarios take a bit of getting used to! The chairmen make Villa's Deadly Doug Ellis look patient, and constantly living under fear of the sack gets annoying, understandably.

BEST BIT SO FAR

A four goal salvo by Bayern Munich and Peru starlet Claudio Pizarro in our *CL* qualifier.

VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The glossy atmosphere
+ Clive Tyldesley commentary

GM HATES
- The marked similarity to PIFA
- It's still not Pro Evo, is it?

MOST WANTED METER

It's shaping up well, but with FIFA and Pro Evo entrenched at the top on the league, we still fear for the young pretender.

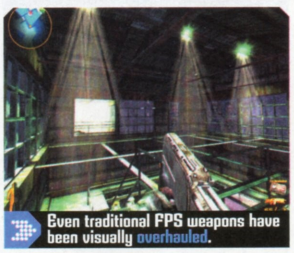
CAN'T WAIT?

MOST LIKE: FIFA (XB) **BIGGEST RIVAL:** Pro Evo
OUT SOONER: Club Football 2005, out now

- OUT: MAY
- FORMAT: PC
- PRICE: £34.99
- DEVELOPER: KYLOTONN
- PUBLISHER: DIGITAL JESTERS
- ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- CALL: 01707 871516
- PLAYERS: 1-32

BET ON SOLDIER

Unreal 2 crossed with the *Running Man*?



Even traditional FPS weapons have been visually overhauled.

Ah, the old enemy standing next to flammable barrels mistake.

First Person Shooters are brimming with talent at the mo, thanks to the likes of *Doom 3*, *Half Life 2* and *Halo 2*. These beauties aside though, the majority of shooters are still sorely lacking in inspiration. Well, things might just be changing with the arrival of *Bet on Soldier*.

In the midst of (yet another) WW3, two rival federations treat the conflict as a mere business opportunity. The toughest mercenaries compete against each other for large wads of cash. No – we can't quite work out precisely how it'll all going to come together either, but even without the gambling element, this game is still shaping up nicely.

Graphically, things look mouth-watering, running on Kylotonn's own proprietary engine. Although the version we tested was a very early build, some of the levels were already sporting DX9 sparkle. A physics engine is also in the offing, so expect fast progress in the months to come.

Kylotonn are hoping that the gambling element of *Bet on Soldier* will get the online community buzzing. We'd be more worried that everybody will be gearing up for *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* by then, but hey – nobody gave *Far Cry* much credence until it arrived and blew the gaming world away. This is definitely worth watching out for.

Rob Taylor GM

The squad-based elements in the game are shaping up very nicely.

Need to Know

What is it?

An ambitious FPS by fledgling developers Kylotonn

Facts

- An intriguing new take on a genre in dire need of a little inspiration
- A single-player mission that takes you from Europe to Alaska and Cuba
- More than 40 different weapons, all with alternate fire – an FPS record?
- Eight selectable warrior classes, all with their own strengths

Rumour

- You can bet against yourself. (Only kidding.)

From the people who made...

Iron Storm 75%

GM Verdict

GM LOVES

+ The game engine is shaping up nicely, and the physics make us really happy.

GM HATES

– We're worried that *S.T.A.L.K.E.R* will pummel it into the ground.

MOST WANTED METER

It's looking undeniably decent. But after gorging on *Doom 3* and *Half Life 2*, is there any more room in our fat tummies for *Bet on Soldier*?

EYE CANDY

By the time it's May, *S.T.A.L.K.E.R* may be the new king of the FPSs. However, one area that *BOS* is clearly gambling on is state-of-the-art visuals.

Bad B.O is faithfully recreated using its in-game engine.

How do these guys find the time to keep their armour so shiny?

This mission is set in a ruined cathedral – it's visually stunning.

The lighting effects really shine. Now, where are our Ray-Bans?

- OUT: FEBRUARY
- FORMAT: PS2
- PRICE: £39.99
- DEVELOPER: SNK
- PUBLISHER: SNK PLAYMORE
- ONLINE: NO
- OTHER FORMATS: NONE
- CALL: 01925 9319703
- PLAYERS: 1-2

KING OF FIGHTERS: MAXIMUM IMPACT

This game is innovate? Is it April already?

Another month, another beat 'em up franchise. But wait – before you all turn the page, there's something you should know. After a decade of 2D goodness, SNK have finally decided to bring their flagship fighter into the next generation with a 3D makeover. So is this just change for change's sake or does what SNK have got cooking smell decidedly good?

We'll start with the good news. There's definitely some novelty value seeing *KOF: MI*'s now-legendary characters in a whole new light. Another bonus with 3D is that it's relatively easy to design alternative outfits. This means that the likes of Kyo Kusanagi and Mai Shiranui get to don some pretty funky duds so they can at least look the biz whilst they are cracking skulls.

KOF: MI plays almost identically to its 2D brethren, with the additional that you are able to sadistically kick defenceless opponents whilst they lie on the turf, which is always good for a laugh. Also, in typical fighter fashion, *KOF:MI* offers a very scant number of gameplay modes, alongside a 'story'.

It's possible that SNK's attempts to gain a new audience with *KOF: MI* might just end up sacrificing the game's traditionally most attractive trait – personality. Swapping arguably the best hand-drawn artwork of any title around for a generic 3D look might be tantamount to making a deal with the devil in the eyes of the existing *King of Fighters* community. As for us, we'll wait for the final code before passing judgement.

Rob Taylor GM

IN SHAPE

We figured that *KOF*'s legions of fans might want to see how their favourite characters shape up in 3D. So, presented for your delectation are some of the most legendary combatants in the series, doing what they do best – fighting...

Poncy Kyo Kusanagi's hairband still makes him look girly.

GM's fave capped martial arts slugger Terry Bogard returns.

Cool band member Iori Yagami looks more trendy than ever.

Night Fever, Night Fever! Soiree's over-enthusiastic dancing doesn't go down well with Lien.

Ladies first! Terry's gonna have a hell of a sore head in the morning.

Need to Know

What is it?

KOF finally punches and kicks its way into the C21, featuring fully 3D fighting action for the first time. Tekken and DOA watch out.

Facts

- Send your opponents flying into the sky, before pummelling them like never before with the innovative new Knock Back Attack technique
- 24 playable characters, including 14 favourites like Terry Bogard mixed with six brand new ones as well as four hidden fighters

Rumour

- An Xbox version is in the pipeline.

From the people who made...

Capcom Vs SNK 72%

GM Verdict

GM LOVES

+ Seeing game characters we've all grown up with finally evolve into 3D.

GM HATES

– Seeing game characters we've all grown up with finally succumb to 3D
– The slow gameplay

MOST WANTED METER

We're worried about how this one is shaping up. Some games shouldn't deviate from their roots, especially when they look as ropey as *KOF: MI*.

• OUT: 25TH FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: SEGA
• PUBLISHER: SEGA • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: GBA • CALL: 020 8995 3399 • PLAYERS: 1

PS2

MR WOLF

Who are you? What happened to the government goons who made you a monster? *Altered Beast* raises more questions than it answers, but one thing we can explain is the process of turning from a human into a bloody great wolf.

As a bloke, your aim is to punch enemies in the stomach. Hard.

Then you get a quick burst of stomach-twirling CG...

And then it's time to rip someone a new ass with your fingernails.

ALTERED BEAST

Just howlin', howlin' at the mooooon...

Don't remember *Altered Beast*? Don't worry. Because exactly one bit of this new take on the MegaDrive classic – the fact that you change into a beast – is the same as the original. Everything else has been sexed up, so that instead of being a bloke in a dodgy loincloth, you're a gene-spliced soldier. With amnesia. Crikey.

The end result's a bit like *Dynasty Warriors* or *Chaos Legion* – acres of bad things to wade through, with very little thought needed. What sets it above more mediocre hack-'em-ups is the extreme ick factor. Each transformation is accompanied by a quick CG sequence showing, say, your eyeballs bulging out of their sockets, or your fingers snapping backwards as you make the transition to huge wolf beast. Also, you'll frequently only injure enemies, leaving them stumbling around with legs, arms or heads torn off, waiting to be finished. The boss design is another gut-wrencher – the end of the first level sees you battling a giant rat/iguana thing that spews bones at you, before hurtling out of its sewer and engulfed the entire screen. At the moment, we're still loving the blend of violence with more violence and the odd puzzle. Whether the novelty'll wear off to go remains to be seen.

Joel Snape GM

Need to Know

What is it?

A remake – sort of – of the MegaDrive classic. With a lot more slashing, less side-scrolliness and a totally different plot. So not really a remake, then.

Facts

- Change into eight different 'beasts', including werewolf, dragon, minotaur and merman.

Rumour

- There's a version of the arcade original included as a bonus.

From the people who made...

Super Monkey Ball	91%
Blood Will Tell	N/A
Sonic Advance 3	85%
Puyo Pop Fever	75%

It's possible to assign (or gene-splice) combos to each animal.

Hint no. 1: When confronted with giant ig-rats, *turn into a wolf.*

As a merman, you gob bubbles at fish. How can that kill them, then?

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The gratuitously icksome transformations
+ Killing so much that the screen's red with blood

GM HATES
- How far apart the save points are
- Fighting the annoying crows

MOST WANTED METER

Does the world need another variant on the *Dynasty Warriors* series? Well, maybe if you can turn into a one of the Monkey Ball chimps...

• OUT: APRIL • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £34.99 • DEVELOPER: NADEO
• PUBLISHER: DIGITAL JESTERS • ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 01707 871516 • PLAYERS: 1-10

PCCD

Need to Know

What is it?

The surprise online smash of 2003 gets a revamp with beefed up visuals and a new track editor. High octane racing has never been crazier!

Facts

- Two new solo modes - platform and crazy - to spice up single-player.
- Entirely new graphics engine with enhanced lighting effects.
- Redesigned track editor so custom courses can be whipped up in next to no time. Tracks are so small you can email them to each other!

Rumour

- Michael Schumacher is a big fan.

From the people who made...

Trackmania	81%
Virtual Skipper 3	87%

You can create tracks of your own that look as visually lush as this.

TRACKMANIA: SUNRISE

Better than Abbamania or even *Wrestlemania*...

Everyone's fave quirky customisable racer has finally had a fresh lick of paint. Best remembered as a title that didn't take itself too seriously, and actively encouraged you to drive like a maniac, *Trackmania's* sense of fun was renowned.

Besides the racing japery, the game's other central component is the track designer, which has been given an overhaul. Thankfully, though, it's so simple you don't have to be a nerd to turn architect. In fact, almost everything in this game can be tweaked, from buildings and track sections to customisable car skins and player avatars.

Obviously, you'd have to be a bit on the sad side to fall in love with *Trackmania* having just played the rather limited single player mode. Nope – where this game really shines is online, jostling for supremacy against a bunch of flash gits from Italy,° who fancy themselves as the ultimate boy racers.

Trackmania: Sunrise looks a million miles better than the original, but also scales very well - meaning you don't need a high-powered PC to get the best out of the gameplay. Purists who preach that graphics maketh not the game rejoice! So, if you're looking for a fast-paced, fully customisable racer with an established fan base, then *Trackmania* should be right up your street.

Rob Taylor GM

Check out that paint job – the driver must have more money than sense.

Looks more like *NFS Underground 2* than the original here!

GM VERDICT

GM LOVES
+ The overhauled visuals
+ The track editor, it's so much simpler to use than before

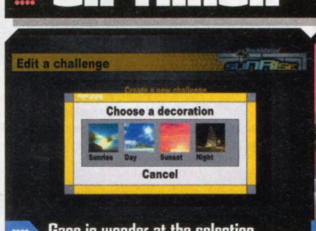
GM HATES
- This is one of those games you'll either love or hate
- Realistic it is not

MOST WANTED METER

The established fanbase will go wild with delirium. We dig the revamped visuals, but underneath the gloss it's nothing really new.

ON TRACK

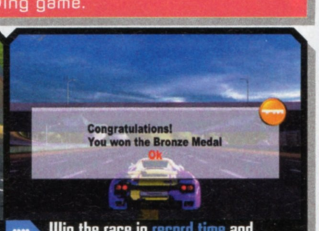
Part of the original *Trackmania*'s niche appeal was the track editor, which allowed fans to design some of the most intense courses ever seen in a driving game.



Gape in wonder at the selection of smokin' new track decorations.

Design your track and commit the plan to memory. Sneaky.

Invite others to race without letting on it's your track.



Win the race in record time and laugh at your competitors.

> Online – your best friend
> can play with you every night.

» Paedophiles love playing games with their victims – computer games. They use online gaming as a way of befriending you, so they can gain your trust and eventually get you to meet.

So always be aware, the people you are interacting with may not always be who they say they are.

Whether it be through online gaming or just chatrooms, play safe and don't give out information that could allow them to contact you, or your friends – like phone numbers, e-mail or home addresses, and never ever agree to meet someone, especially on your own.

Stop paedophiles doing their homework.

For more info go to » thinkuknow.co.uk

Home Office

THE P

Sony's first handhold on the handheld market is here!

Specialist: Steve Bailey

Just what the hell is going to happen when the unstoppable PlayStation juggernaut ramraids Nintendo's unmovable stranglehold on portable gaming? Plagues of locusts? Rivers of blood? Rumours of poor loading times?? QUESTIONABLE BATTERY LIFE?! We finger every last curve and cranny of the PSP – bar the screen, of course, we're not barbarians – and tell you all about it. Is two new handhelds in the space of month enough to send us into toxic gaming shock? Read on...

SPEC TACKLE

The PSP in numbers and posh words

COLOUR:
Black

DIMENSIONS:
Approx 170mm (W) x 23mm (H) x 74mm (D)

WEIGHT:
Approx 280g (inc. battery)

CPU:
PSP CPU (system clock frequency 1 - 333 MHz)

EMBEDDED D-RAM:
4MB

DISPLAY:
4.3 inch, 16:9 Wide screen TFT LCD
480 x 272 pixel, 16.77 million colours
Maximum luminance 180/130/80cd/m2 (when using battery pack)
Maximum luminance 200/180/80cd/m2 (when using AC Adaptor)

SOUND:
Built-in stereo speakers

MAIN INPUT/OUTPUT:
IEEE 802.11b (Wi-Fi)
USB 2.0 (mini-B)
Memory stick PRO duo
IrDA
IR Remote (SIRCS)

MAIN CONNECTORS:
Memory stick duo slot
USB connector
DC OUT connector
DC IN 5V connector
Headset connector

POWER:
Lithium-ion battery
AC adaptor

DISC DRIVE:
UMD drive (read only)

PROFILE:
PSP game
UMD audio (profile name TBD)
UMD video (profile name TBD)

CODEC:
Video - H.264/AVC MP Level3
Audio - ATRAC3plus, MP3

WIRELESS COMMUNICATION:
Infrastructure mode
Ad hoc mode (connection up to 16 consoles)

PSP'S FRONT

DIRECTIONAL PAD

It seems like a strange choice, to begin with, giving the D-pad such prominence over the analogue stick. Maybe it's because people are used to controlling handhelds via a digital input, or the fact that the analogue stick itself isn't as pliant as what we're used to with modern day joypads. Regardless, the D-pad works fine, is soft without feeling flimsy, and is where your thumb will land naturally when using the unit.

THE SCREEN

It's the unmistakable jewel in the PSP's sleek crown: crisp as a poppadum, clear as a punch in the face, brighter than fireworks and as stunning as another punch in the face. The screen quality is simply incredible, so much so that when you see its size and clarity for the first time, it looks like some kind of impossible freak. PSP screen – we love you, and want your one-eyed children.

SPEAKER

This single, lengthy bar perforated with little holes may give the PSP the look of a leg shaver from a certain angle, but it's actually one long speaker output. It's size means that the unit can blare out some fantastic noise in all manner of ways. Games such as *Medievil* and *Ridge Racers* sound magnificent, and you can expect movies to feature some quality audio in their playback.

ANALOGUE STICK

It's hardly raised, and it looks like a second speaker, or maybe a flattering beauty spot, but this *is* an analogue stick. Instead of leaning like standard mushroom-shaped joypad equivalents, it *slides*. Sound wrong? It feels it, too, at least initially. With practice, it can be squidged about with grace, but it's really quite hard to do so if you're on the move. Plus, you'll have to get used to that wacko positioning...

HOME

Some people think this switches the machine off. They're wrong. We pressed it loads and you just get a Quit Game option.

VOLUME

Well, you all know this, right? If not, can we suggest that you forget about the PSP and start with a 'television' instead?

SIGHT AND SOUND

This pair of buttons toggles your audio and visual options. Given the luxurious 16:9 nature of the screen, the movie playback facility and numerous audio possibilities of the memory stick, you'll probably be using these a lot, perhaps as much as the analogue stick.

HANDS ON AND ON AND ON AND ON...

Okay, so the PSP doesn't have a touch screen, but that didn't stop us getting stuck in.

This is *Everybody's Golf*. Games in this series sell millions of copies in Japan.

This is football. No, really - *This Is Football*, the latest game from Sony's TIF team.

See the analogue stick in use there? See how weird it makes our hands look. Bleurgh.

Ape Academy is a more fun than being sprayed with pink lemonade by a dozen nurses.

UMD PORT

This is where your games and movies will live, slotted into the PSP's gut via a gap in the top of the unit. The UMD's, as you'll read over the next page, aren't actually discs as such. Well, they are, but they come locked into a small plastic case which goes straight into the PSP, keeping your discs relatively free from dirt and crumbs. With discs that size, you'll be needing that protection, too.

MEMORY HOLE

This is the entrance for your Memory Stick. Flick open the flap, and shove it in. Gently. 'MagicGate' is just the name of the technology. Don't get your hopes up about it being a portal to Disneyland.

TM

PSP'S BACK

SHOULDER BUTTONS

These glassy little nipples are a little weird. They give the PSP its sassy shape by completing its curves, but they can't help but look a little cheap. Bits of see-through plastic aren't classy, and the PSP isn't flattered by them. Still, they feel fine in practice, but the left button is a difficult one to reach comfortably when you're twiddling the analogue stick.

FACE BUTTONS

Set out in the standard PlayStation configuration that we've come to know and love almost instinctively, thanks to some 10 years of devotion. These buttons sit happily beneath your right thumb as you grasp the unit. They feel firm and springy, and don't clash with the PSP's design in the slightest. We look forward to the inevitable glut of quirky rhythm action games, if these are our instruments...

ODD SCREW HOLES

The top of the machine is punctured with a symmetric pair of screw holes, either side of the USB port... is this where the camera/microphone/whatever will sit?

USB PORT

Any standard Sony USB cable will fit this, allowing you to transfer files back and forth from your PC and Memory Stick. It's USB 2.0, so is really quite quick while it's at it.

EJECT BUTTON

This little slider flicks open the UMD drive for your games and movies to slink into. It pops out with a cheap little click, which is probably our first and only taste of such flimsiness with the PSP.

POWER

HOLD

START

START & SELECT

The PSP is almost obliged to feature these buttons, really. Start will, obviously, pause the game, whereas select will probably be given a non-essential role during most games, adding some extra options to the mix. It's the weirdest place this pair has ever lived, in our opinion.

Medievil is back, too, after missing out on a whole generation since the original PS games.

BIG IN JAPAN

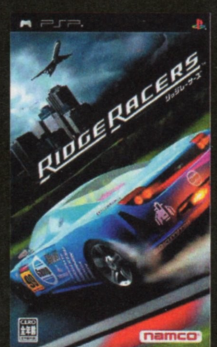
Unlike the Nintendo DS, the PSP premiered in its home territory. Did anyone die in the rush?

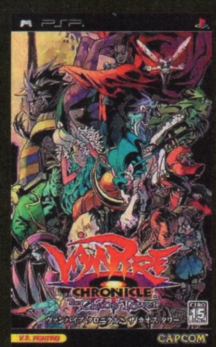
The launch of the PSP was more than a little bonkers, but it wasn't due to the typically zany mentalism that Japanese people are renowned for. It was Sony's fault, for providing just 200,000 machines on the day of launch. Here you have a handheld debut from the world's biggest video game hardware manufacturer, a launch that's as anticipated as anything else out there, and Sony decides to deliberately make the release a strangled, frustrated murmur instead of almighty, Nintendo DS-style roar. Sony has said that it's doing this in order to concentrate its energies on the more-profitable PS2, which is currently selling out across the universe.

The machine touched down in Japan on 12th December, for the worryingly cheap sum of just 20,790 yen (just over £100). Of course, with such a shortage in effect, importing websites halted pre-orders some weeks previous. The increase in demand has forced Japanese retailers to up their prices, and cause importers to have to fork out far more cash than they ever expected for the machine. Not to mention the insane online exploitation taking place across internet auction sites...

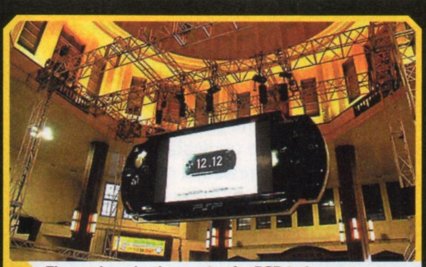
Still, Sony has said that some 100,000 units will be making it into stores each week after launch, and it's likely that such amounts won't be enough to mop up all that gushing demand. So, the launch has been a success in terms of it selling out and becoming a hot piece of kit, but it's left a lot of folk – especially importers – feeling starved before doing a little cry and dashing back to their Nintendo DS's. What with the Euro launch being some months away, we don't expect there to be such a fuss when the machine hits the UK. Well, hopefully.

The PSP hadn't even launched in the Far East, and there were already two PSP mags available to buy. Some compensation, at least, if you couldn't get your mitts on the real thing.

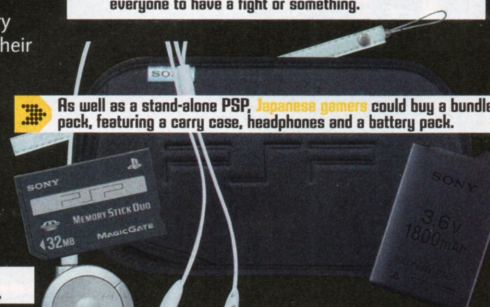




Ridge Racers and *Vampire Chronicle* have been the biggest PSP hits during its first month on release, thanks to both being updates of much-loved franchises.



The pre-launch ad campaign for PSP in Japan was intense stuff, even more so when you consider the lack of machines available at release. It's like they wanted everyone to have a fight or something.



As well as a stand-alone PSP, Japanese gamers could buy a bundle pack, featuring a carry case, headphones and a battery pack.

SONY AND SHARE

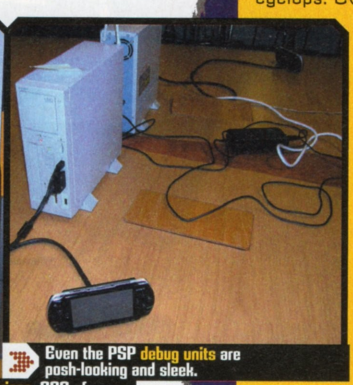
Is Sony taking the PSP? We head over to its London HQ to find out...

Just two days before the PSP poked its head up through Japanese soil, we were invited down to Sony's London base. As well as being granted a lengthy fondle of the PSP itself, we had a glimpse at the intended range of first-party 'launch window' games, due when the machine debuts here. 'Launch window' is a bit of a fuzzy one – meaning that the nine games we were shown are coming out 'around' the same time as the PSP. But then again, Sony's press conference wasn't one that was jumping with vital details. No mention of a definite UK price or release date was given, but if we were pushed by some gun-wielding wrestlers to take a guess at the price, we reckon it'll be somewhere around the £150-180 mark. With regards to the release date, however, a few developers we spoke to did let slip with a vague something about March being the time they were aiming for. So, while not gospel, it's a good estimate of when to expect the PSP.

Sony itself seemed on the case regarding how it expects gamers to use the machine. Playing on your PS2 is 'session' gaming, according to Sony, whereby you put aside several hours to dedicate to one long couch-bound playtime. But the PSP will be home to 'opportunity' gaming, whereby players will snatch whatever five minute period they can to squeeze in a burst of swift handheld play. We're not really sure if that's how most of you out there approach handheld gaming, but it does mean at least that Sony has a firm, focussed idea of how to go about crafting its portable gaming experiences. And it's done just that.

All of the games we played had been geared towards convenient, miniature play-sessions, from *Formula 1*'s mad-loose handling system to *Ridge Racers*' customisable micro-championships. Turn the page to find out more. The developer sessions themselves were pretty snazzy, with each game being demo-ed via a number of swanky display screens by a handful of patient developer-types. We were constantly reminded that the PSP's screen wasn't being done full justice by the fancy flat-screen TV displays, and this wasn't just fluff – you really have to see the PSP's screen in actual, heavenly motion to understand just why everyone is so impressed.

This is the lovely Phil Harrison, CEO of Importance at Sony Europe.



Even the PSP debug units are posh-looking and sleek.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

PSP: A PRETTY SONY PARCEL

We came (to work), we saw (a package), we kicked some ass (well, bubble wrap).

It's like being a brain surgeon, opening the packaging of new hardware for the first time. Delicately and slowly you go, snipping open the bits of tape and gently coaxing out those little flaps. You can't rush these things, y'know.

It's like working as part of a bomb disposal squad, sweating away for five minutes until... plop. Out it comes. A brand new machine! The PSP. And oh boy, was it beautiful. Look at the size of the screen! It's like they've left a cinema screen in the washing machine for too long. As slinky and smooth as polished panther, the PSP's first impressions are blinding. Unlike the DS, which takes time to reveal its qualities, the PSP shines like the cutting-edge piece of tech that it is: solid, weighty and full of multimedia promise.

We got hold of our PSP courtesy of online importing specialist Lik Sang (www.lik-sang.com). By the time you read this, the madness of the Japanese launch should have calmed somewhat, meaning that there should be plentiful stock for any impatient importing types. Be warned, however: the PSP itself is a region-free console, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the games will be. That's down to the individual publisher. The Xbox is in exactly the same situation, and no-one thinks of it as a region-free machine. We'll have to wait and see how it pans out. And so should you.

HOW DOES IT LOOK?

In a word? Dazzling. In a sound effect? KER-CHING. Sony's dark knight looks like a sleek black Ferrari next to the jolly ice-cream van that is the Nintendo DS. And that screen... it makes the PSP look like some beautiful cyclops. Even with the lights on, we had to tone down the brightness of the main screen while playing *Ridge Racers*. And we had to hold the machine at arm's length, to save our eyebrows from the nuclear glow.

"Fee Fi Fo Fum, I smell the blood of a lithium-ion battery."

The buttons and D-pad are embedded neatly, and even the analogue stick manages to secrete itself away nicely, looking more a mini-speaker than a control device. The clear shoulder buttons do spoil the effect slightly, but feel solid and responsive in use, and can be clicked down with the length of your finger instead of just the tip. Even the official carry case manages to look swish, holding a PSP like a snug little sleeping bag.

Anyway, back to that screen, eh? It's so big that developers are using it for split-screen gaming (*Puyo Pop*, *Ape Academy*). Now that's the lap of luxury.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

Well, the D-pad and the buttons feel great, in terms of both positioning and actual use. They fall directly under your thumbs as you hold the unit naturally. The analogue stick is a little more difficult, however. It's tucked down far too low on the left for it to be instinctively useful, especially when you've got to twiddle it in conjunction with the shoulder buttons. There's not much give either, meaning that it's hard to use with any amount of subtlety. Those shoulder buttons feel a bit chunky and sharp, but it means that your fingers can find them swiftly, and there's a good solid click when they're pressed.

For anyone who's ever wondered how the PSP measure up to Dave's happy head.

The UMD drive, which pops out with a flick of the eject button, does feel a little cheap and rickety, however, and is about the only area where the machine feels rough. Both the battery and memory stick are effortless to insert, and neither pokes out. Still, that analogue stick does make something like *Gran Turismo 4* seem like a disconcerting effort to play well. We'll see.

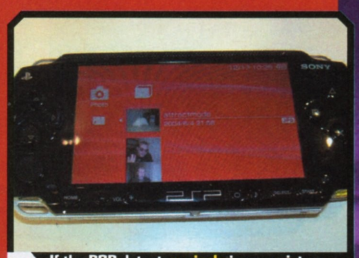
It's well worth hooking the PSP up to a set of headphones. The sound quality goes from very good to excellent, and the fact that you have something over your ears makes you feel like you're underwater, or something.

MENU AT WORK

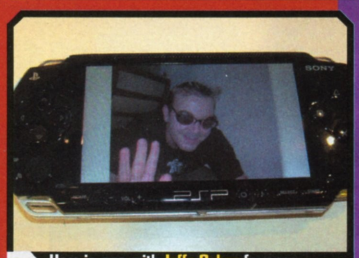
Photos? Tunes? Movies? Soup of the day? The PSP is only to happy to oblige...

PHOTOS

Here's a bunch of our own pictures. Just shuffle through the menu, and you'll get to a slide show of thumbnails. Obviously, you can enlarge any pics you fancy, and that brings up a host of whole new options for zooming, rotating etc. It's like the least boring photo album ever made, and it's portable, too.



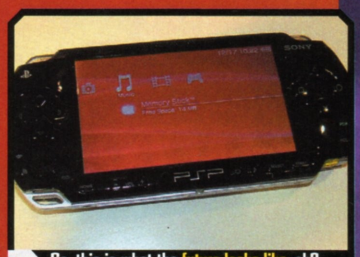
If the PSP detects a nipple in your picture ,it'll switch itself off. Kidding!



Here is man with Jaffa Cakes for eyes pretending to fly. Thank you, PSP!

MAIN MENU

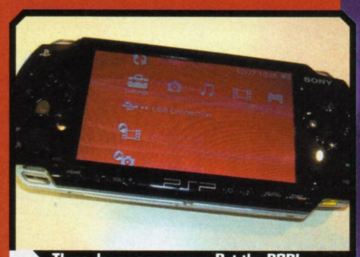
This is the PSP's desktop. Switch on the machine with no game inserted,and you'll be taken here to this menu screen. The backdrop changes colour, depending on the season, and there's a lovely little set of lines swirling away gently in the background. Pressing left and right cycles through the options available – config, music, photos, videos, games – and up/down takes you through the sub menus for each. Intuitive and effective.



So, this is what the future looks like, eh? We just knew there'd be swirly lines.

EASIER THAN STEAK 'N' EASY PIE

You can connect your PSP to your PC and Mac using any Sony USB cable. We used the one from our digital camera, and it worked fine. Just select the USB option, and you're away. The PSP pops up on your computer as a storage device; just create a folder, copy your pics and mp3's across, and that's it. But remember – you'll need a memory stick to do any of this.

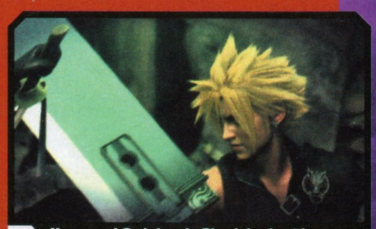


Three down, one across. But the PSP's menu system is anything but a puzzle.

VIDEOS

While MP3s and photos are simple enough to port onto your PSP, videos are a whole different issue. Because the PSP only runs videos made with a special codec (see the tech specs on the previous page), they'll need to be encoded before they can be viewed. And here's another thing to be wary of: while the games are, potentially, region-free, UMD movies won't be, and will obey the typical region-specific rules of DVDs.

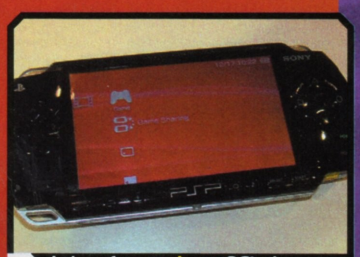
Boooooo! Hey, it's Sephiroth, and he's been working on his Evil especially for the PSP.



Yaaaaayy! And there's Cloud, back with a massive sword for the Final Fantasy movie.

GAME SHARING

Here's an interesting little feature that we've always hoped we'd see turning up in the world of video games – the game sharing facility. This option allows you to swap game data with others, as well as beam small demos of games to other PSP owners in the vicinity.We imagine that you could probably store them on the Memory Stick, too, and keep them even when the machine gets switched off.



Jealous of someone's game? Simply hassle them to beam you the demo. Easy.

MP3S

Unlike the PSP's video capabilities, the music functions are far more relaxed, meaning that good old MP3s work fine. Get yourself a larger Memory Stick, and you're looking at turning your PSP into a not-too-distant relative of the iPod, creating albums for folders via your PC and a USB cable. The sound quality is obviously lovely, especially when you've got a pair of earphones slotted in.

The PSP supports two audio formats – everyone's fave MP3, and ATRAC3 plus.

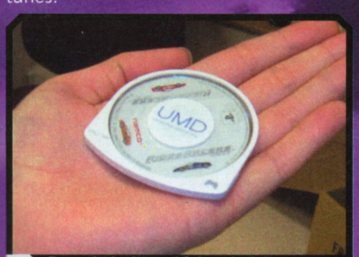
UMDS

Weapons of Mass Distraction.

This is a first for video games – a disc that thinks it's a cartridge. Like some advert for safe interactive sex, UMDs (universal media discs) come sealed away in a hard plastic case, with a small hole for laser access.

They're protected from fingerprints, and you can bung them into your PSP and yank them out without minimal concern for the disc's cleanliness. It seems, though, that they will be tricky to clean if something does get onto the disc or into the casing.

The disc is just 60mm in diameter, and can store up to 1.8 Gb of data. As well as movies, it's intended for music to feature on UMD, allowing the release of special edition albums containing concert footage and other video goodies along with the tunes.



Pretty little thing, eh? Just don't let any toasted breadcrumbs get into that casing.

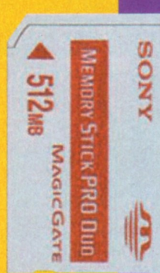
"Open wide... her comes the aeroplane... neeoww... PSP LOVES HIS NUM NUMS."

Don't worry. We're not trying to shave the PSP. Memory Sticks are just tiny.

MEMORY STICKS

A brain in a bar

'Stick' is probably a bit of a misleading name, considering how it conjures up images of a long twig of a memory card. The basic Memory Stick that comes bundled in the PSP's Value Pack is teeny, and is just begging to be lost. Thankfully, these sticks slot straight into the side of the PSP and are locked away until you need to remove them.



A Memory Stick is essential, even if you don't plan on using the PSP's video and music talents, as it's the only way for you to save your games. The standard card is 32MB in size, which is fine, considering that *Ridge Racers* takes up just 272 Kb, roughly one hundredth of the Stick's capacity. While a Memory Stick is essential, though, it's not a unique PSP peripheral. You can use Sony branded Memory Sticks with larger capacities, but be sure to get ones with 'Magic Gate' compatibility. There are also 'Pro' sticks available as well, which mean that they operate at twice the speed of non-Pro Sticks.

THE FIRST

While not strictly launch titles as such, these are the games that will be bowling you

APE ACADEMY

Monkey see, monkey do some exams!

■ DEVELOPER: SCEJ ■ WIRELESS PLAYERS: 2-4

We'd always dreaded our simian evo-buddies rising up from captivity, stealing our clothes and catchphrases, hacking down the Statue of Liberty with a machete, and turning us all into banana-farming slaves. But not to worry – this isn't a real university, and it's about as intellectual as flushing a toilet. This is where apes go to perfect those wacky skills that'll keep them in videogame deals for the rest of their lives. It's where they learn to protect a spit-roasted banana from hordes of the undead, use a metal shield to defend themselves against flurries of arrows, and try to matador an entire herd of rampaging bulls.

There are over 45 mini-games on offer, each zanier than the last. Examples? There's the one with the walking tower of monkeys. You'll have to tippy tap the D-pad back and forth in order to maintain that balance as you tackle a slope. It's brilliant, brilliant stuff, the kind that causes you to swear like a prime minister when you bail, despite yourself. You know the 100m dash? Well, *Ape Academy* features the 1m dash. No, really. It's over in a second, and amazingly tense for it. And it's one of a handful of games that can be played in wireless multi-player.

The 1m dash in all its short, sweet and massively stressful glory.

Capable players can earn themselves trophies and statues. The role of these collectible trinkets is to add a little spice to multi-player games, as you can use them for betting. The game also caters for two players on a single PSP, too. Each player takes a shoulder button and either the D-pad or the face buttons, and scraps it out in a game of air hockey that makes excellent use of the PSP's long, lovely screen. It's all very cosy, invoking fond memories of *Micro Machines*.

Or there's the magnificent paper/scissors/rock shoot-'em-up; where players fire said items at each other from across either side of the screen, trying to outguess and outpsyche each other with their choice of ammo. And why don't they teach that in schools, eh?

We couldn't resist taking pics of monkeys instead of developers.

DEV TALK

"THIS IS NOT JUST A PORT. THIS IS A TOTALLY ORIGINAL GAME FOR THE PLATFORM, WITH LOTS OF NEW ELEMENTS, AND QUICK-FIRE PLAY, SUITED TO THE PSP AUDIENCE."

No mini-game bundle is complete without a simple golfing range. Although we don't trust that shifty ape standing behind you. He'll probably drink his own wee to distract you.

This is the two-player *Air Hockey* game in action. Not pictured: big pair of smiles.

VERDICT

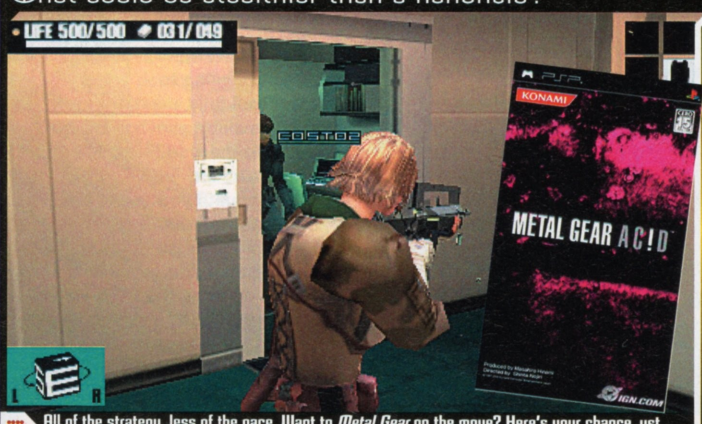
Completely bananas, and inventive enough to keep you entertained and sniggering for good length of time.

SCORE 8/10

■ DEVELOPER: KONAMI ■ WIRELESS PLAYERS: TBC

METAL GEAR ACID

What could be stealthier than a handheld?



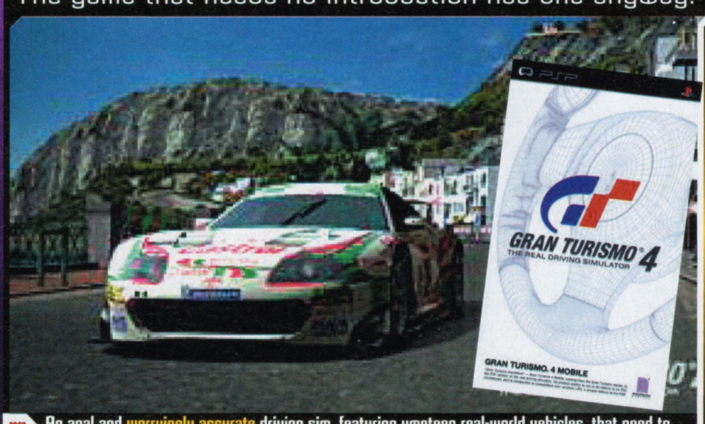
All of the strategy, less of the pace. Want to *Metal Gear* on the move? Here's your chance. ust one button press gets your Metal arse into Gear. Less control is more, it seems.

SCORE 8/10

■ DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY ■ WIRELESS PLAYERS: TBC

GRAN TURISMO 4 MOBILE

The game that needs no introduction has one anyway.



An anal and worryingly accurate driving sim, featuring umpteen real-world vehicles, that need to be piloted with skill and dedication to just get them around the first bend.

SCORE 8/10

AND THE REST... ■ Tales Of Eternia ■ Dynasty Warriors ■ Hollon ■ Armoured Core: Formula Front ■ Garghav Trilogy ■ Final Fantasy 7: Advent Children ■ Doko Demo Issyo ■ Mahjong Fight Club ■ Dead Aggressor ■ Tenchi No Mon ■ Vs 6: Ark Of Napishtim ■ Bleach ■ Tower Of Purgatory ■ Beatbox Studio ■ Need For Speed Underground Rivals ■ London Taxi ■ Advent Shadow ■ Battlefield PSP ■ HIGL Project ■ Vulcanus Online ■ Coded Arms ■ Puyo Pop Fever ■ Gekido: The Dark Angel ■ Star Wars: Revenge Of The Sith ■ Crisis Core: Final Fantasy 7 ■ MX Unleashed ■ Batman Begins ■ Winning Eleven

GAMES

r way during the initial months of the PSP's UK release.

DEV TALK
"WITHOUT EXCEPTION, EVERYONE WHO HAS SEEN THE EARLY VERSIONS OF MERCURY BEHIND THE SCENES HAS IMMEDIATELY LOVED IT. IT'S AN INCREDIBLE GAME WHICH WILL DEFINE A NEW GENRE."

WIPEOUT PURE

Back to the futuristic hover racing...

- **DEVELOPER:** SCEE LIVERPOOL
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2-8

No Sony console is complete without an instalment of a fashionable soundtrack, twisted race courses and point aircraft of the WipeOut series. And so here's Sony Liverpool's attempt at completing the PSP. Despite being built from the ground up for the handheld, Pure looks and feels like WipeOut.

There are changes, such as the way your craft refuels by absorbing energy from weapon pick-ups, instead of having to detour into a pit lane.

The Zone mode is the only major significant difference from the PS2 version. It involves racing around stylised, minimal-looking tracks as quickly as you possible can. The longer you can stay on the track, the faster you go. It may be on a smaller screen, but it never looked as stark and pretty as this.

DEV TALK
"THERE ARE 12 NEW TRACKS (ALONG WITH FOUR CLASSIC TRACKS HIDDEN AWAY). SOME OF THE SHIP NAMES WILL BE FAMILIAR, BUT ALL THE SHIPS ARE NEWLY MODELLED, TEXTURED AND HAVE NEW HANDLING STATS."

This is the Zone mode, in its crisp and Tron-like glory.

VERDICT

It's as slick and attractive as any other PSP game out there. *The WipeOut* series finally gets its mojo back, it seems.

This little machine is a **colour changer**, to make your blob the right shade to progress.

MERCURY

Who knew heavy metal could be catchy?

The launch line-up of every piece of hardware always features a quirky one. But 'quirky' is probably the wrong word for *Mercury*, because it just doesn't do any justice to the fantastic, mind-spanking concept that's being put into play.

It's all about guiding blobs of liquid metal over and through a fiendish selection of maze-like 3D environments. Gather differently coloured splotches together to make new ones – red and blue to make purple, say – which will allow you to progress. Wobbly bridges and spinning blades dot the levels, and each one could cause you to lose vital spoonfuls of your precious blob if you're not careful. Moving your blob swiftly will stretch it out into a thin line of thick liquid, meaning that you'll have to keep a rock steady hand when navigating those narrow sections. Does this melty metal sound a bit mental? It is. But it's the good kind of mental, the kind that gets your brain revving.

VERDICT

Shiny tunnels, shiny crystals, shiny mercury... how can you not take a shine to it, eh? Bizarre but brilliant.

JAPANESE LAUNCH HIGHLIGHTS

A pair of launch titles yet to be confirmed for release in the UK...

LUMINES

- **DEVELOPER:** QB
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2

The latest music-powered rhythm action games from a man surnamed Mizuguchi is *Lumines* – it's Tetris meets being a DJ. Blocks of four fall from the top of the screen, and matching up four of the same colour makes them vanish – in time with the music. It seems a little shallow to begin with, but could conceal hidden depths. If it doesn't, you could just marvel at all those fancy backdrops.

VAMPIRE CHRONICLES

- **DEVELOPER:** CAPCOM
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2

This is just the latest instalment of Capcom's *Darkstalkers* fighting series. 2D beat-'em-ups seem to work pretty well on the PSP, and *Vampire Chronicles* is a flashy scrapper if nothing else. Detailed characters, colourful backdrops and screen-filling special moves make it impressive stuff, but it doesn't really depart from the 2D fighting formula of high-speed combos and tense two-player stand offs. The wireless one-on-one matches are reliably appealing, too.

FORMULA ONE

- **DEVELOPER:** TRAVELLER'S TALES
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2-8

No manual gears, and an **arcade-like** handling model. F1 goes all soft on us.

EVERYBODY'S GOLF

- **DEVELOPER:** SCEJ
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2-8

It's still a solid, relaxed golf game with **colourful characters** and wireless play.

MEDIEVIL

- **DEVELOPER:** SONY CAMBRIDGE
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** N/A

A pretty, **puzzle-packed** combat adventure with a draw distance to die for.

WRC

- **DEVELOPER:** TRAVELLERS TALES
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2-8

Much like F1, this is another slimmed down racer that's simple to **dive into**.

FOOTBALL

- **DEVELOPER:** SONY LONDON
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2

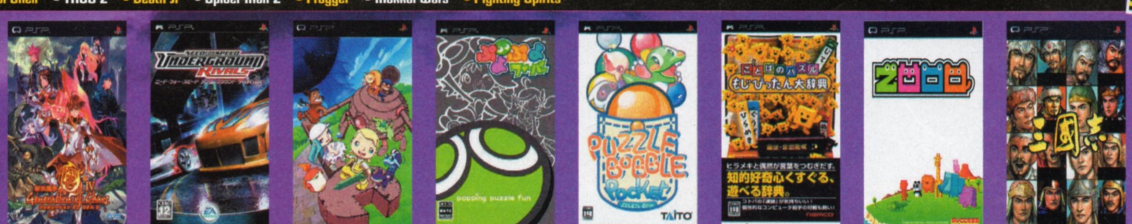
Seems all right, although we're thinking you'll be waiting for a ***FIFA*** or a ***PES***.

FIRED UP

- **DEVELOPER:** SONY LONDON
- **WIRELESS PLAYERS:** 2-8

A vehicle-based multi-player combat for up to eight people, with **Wireless play**.

PSP ▪ Tiger Woods PGA Tour ▪ NaOmi ▪ We Run Through The Beats ▪ Higanjima ▪ Intelligent Licence ▪ Tokyo Xtreme Racing ▪ Densha De Go! ▪ Ghost In The Shell ▪ Derby Time ▪ Generation Of Chaos ▪ Talkman ▪ Stick Balls ▪ Viewtiful Joe ▪ Free Running ▪ Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow ▪ Twisted Metal ▪ NFL Street ▪ NBA Street ▪ ATV Offroad Fury ▪ Super Star Studio ▪ Zero Hour ▪ Metal Shell ▪ THUG 2 ▪ Death Jr ▪ Spider-Man 2 ▪ Frogger ▪ Makkai Wars ▪ Fighting Spirits



PUBLISHER: SONY ■ DEVELOPER: NAMCO ■ WIRELESS PLAYERS: 2-8

RIDGE RACERS

Power slide to the people! Ridge Racer is back...

WHAT IS IT?

Handheld instalment of Namco's classic arcade racer. The original *Ridge* debuted at the PSone's launch, and did great things for everyone involved. *Deja vu?*

- Nine championships
- Forty tunes
- Eight cars

LAND OF THE FREEWHEELING

Ridge Racers is intended more of as a remix of the series, a greatest hits showcase, than a brand new game. So, you'll probably end up recognising more than a few of the tracks. It's a good thing that they've never looked so attractive.

Stages get re-used, but come in reverse form and are set at different times of day.

There's the rolling hills and sweeping mountain bends of the coastal course.

Check out that beautiful view. Go on, put your feet up, and enjoy the ride.

Night-time stages are especially lovely, bringing out all manner of neon and sparks.

: Racing*, Namco's most recent *Ridge Racer*, left us feeling cold and unloved. That amazingly tasty and intuitive power slide system that the series is famed and cherished for – where had it gone, eh? The PSP, that's where. With *Ridge Racers*. Namco has returned to the roots of the series, and found a bulging pot of gold. From the impressive intro sequence – featuring *Ridge* idol Reiko Nagase flouncing about the place like a waft of fine perfume – to the crisp and sleek presentation, it's as fine a showcase for the PSP's powers as Superman being caught playing one while sat on the toilet.

As well as looking supremely pretty, the control method works perfectly on the directional pad. Just a tap of the steering is all it takes to throw your car into a trademark power slide. Got skills? Then you'll be able to cane a 720 slide while taking a corner through a tunnel. Pulling off sweeping skids will fill your nitro bar, a new addition to the series, that provides you with a brief spurt of acceleration to be used at your leisure.

The game features a number of themed championships in a one-player mode, but also offers up a neat extra mode: tell the game how much time you have spare (say, five minutes) and it'll put together a set of races that will last you roughly that long. This gives you the ideal amount of distraction before your bus or train or sled or whatever, arrives.

There's around a million courses, both classic *RR* fodder and fresh offerings, and the soundtrack takes in an equal range of greatest hits and new tunes in its immense girth. And that's pretty much how *Ridge Racers* feels – an ageing formula given so many licks of love that it feels anything but old and tired. GM

NITRO TO GO

It may look like a painfully-lit fart, but that little guff can send you hurtling to the front of the pack if you let rip at the right moment.

Taking corners while going sideways to build up nitro. Up yours, reality!

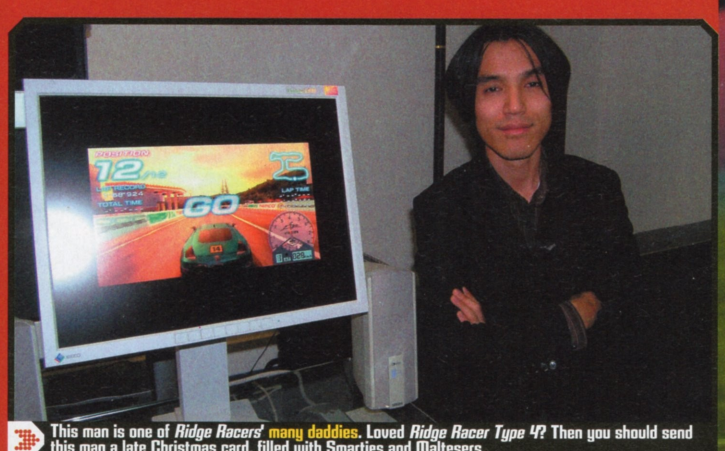
Boof! Using your nitro on a tight bend will probably win you a Darwin award.

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

"GOT SKILLS? THEN YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CANE A 720 SLIDE WHILE TAKING A CORNER"

NAMCO SAYS...

"This is the essence of the whole *Ridge Racer* series, distilled into one game for portable play, with all new features added. Using a selectable handicap system, players can compete seriously (no auto-catch up!), or play for laughs."



This man is one of *Ridge Racers'* many daddies. Loved *Ridge Racer Type 4*? Then you should send this man a late Christmas card, filled with Smarties and Maltesers.

JUDGEMENT

STEVE

GM LOVES

- Stupidly easy powerslides that make us feel like a genius
- The game's stunning looks
- Having all the classic *Ridge* tunes and tracks back for a party

GM HATES

- Well, it's still just *Ridge Racer*, eh? Non-fans won't be converted
- The announcer, who does insist on gobbing off at every corner you take

GRAPHICS 92%

A powerhouse of clear, detailed and fast-moving visual splendour.

GAMEPLAY 90%

More accessible than a plate of hot, salty chips, and just as addictive.

LIFESPAN 85%

Multi-player and time-trial modes are strong, but not everlasting, draws.

OVERALL

90%

An excellent downsizing that does justice to the slick looks and tight controls of the series.

DS vs PSP

Two lightweight machines with heavyweight potential? Seconds out...

	DS	PSP
ROUND 1 APPEARANCE	It doesn't scrub up too nicely, and those first impressions do the machine few favours. It's just not as foxy as we'd expect a modern-day Nintendo handheld to look. **SCORE: 5/10**	The PS2 may be a big, jagged bruise of a living room stain, but the PSP conquers all with its sleek, dark dinner jacket looks. It's the future, in your palm. **SCORE: 10/10**
ROUND 2 COMFORT	Those shoulder buttons make a cramping demand on your fingers in all too short a space of time. The touch screen, provided you've got something to lean on, is brilliant. **SCORE: 7/10**	The analogue stick is a slight issue, but the D-pad and face buttons feel lush and fall directly under your thumbs. Not many games will require that analogue stick, we hope. **SCORE: 8/10**
ROUND 3 BATTERY LIFE	Expect a solid nine or ten hours of play out of a four-hour charge. Which is pretty amazing, considering the machine's well-lit double screens and wireless powers. **SCORE: 9/10**	Depends on what you're doing and how. It's poor compared to the DS, but you are getting a prettier picture. Expect an average usage time of around five hours. **SCORE: 7/10**
ROUND 4 LOADING TIMES	Like all of Nintendo's consoles, you won't be seeing a loading screen in any of the first-party games. There's negligible loading in most other games, too, all thanks to the cart format. **SCORE: 9/10**	Noticeable but not ruinous. Expect an eight second pause in between race tracks on *Ridge Racers*, for example, or fights in *Vampire Chronicle*. **SCORE: 5/10**
ROUND 5 THE GAMES	Despite a lacking US launch line-up, the Japanese line-up was really quite sweet. And the best is yet to come, in terms of games that make canny use of the stylus. **SCORE: 9/10**	Ridge Racers is lovely and pretty and noisy, but we don't expect anything truly groundbreaking from the PSP, just impressively re-jigged PS2 games. **SCORE: 8/10**
ROUND 6 VALUE FOR MONEY	Two excellent screens, stylus functionality and wireless capabilities for a price not far off £100? Hey, don't just buy one – buy two! **SCORE: 8/10**	A widescreen display clear and bright enough to anger the gods? Tons of music/movie/multimedia converging blah blah? *And* wireless play? Buy four! **SCORE: 9/10**
TOTAL SCORE	**48/60**	**48/60**

CONCLUSION:

And the winner is... well, as much of a cop out as it sounds, the result is this: both of them. They both have some extremely sexy pros and a few niggly flaws, but when you weigh the two machines up, their notable qualities are pretty much on a par.

The PSP is a sassy piece of kit, with tremendous audio and visual muscles, and a genuinely useful multimedia vibe about it. It's the handheld that Sony should have made. The Nintendo DS has opened our eyes and fingers to a whole new and delightful way to play, with some colourful and innovative software. It's the handheld that Nintendo should have made, really. And so everything feels right in the world, and the future for both machines looks bright for everyone involved. The PSP feels like futuristic treat, and brand new sexy skin for your games, and the DS, while not as glam, feels like whole new toy, in the best possible sense.

Which means, in the battle of DS Vs PSP, the winner is you. Two brand new, luxurious, feature-rich handhelds? Both retailing for low, low prices and looking to bring with them a bunch of worthy games? And both featuring buckets of cutting-edge tech, shoehorned into portable packages? It's the feel-good story of the year and, as a gamer, yours to own in the coming months. You'll need a second job to pay for it all...

Wave to the people at home, guys! Be sure to wave back, readers. GO ON.

Friendly, gentlemanly handshakes all round. Let's have a nice, clean fight.

Ooooo, get you PictoChat. Some cream with that?

We didn't teach it to say that. Bad PSP, bad.

They're both in the same weight class, at least.

WIN!

PSP: PROCURE SOME PRIZES!

Already got your hands full? Then how about some lovely T-Shirts

Can't get hold a PSP just yet? Don't worry. Here's something to put your twitching thumbs to rest. Sony has given us a pair of swanky T-shirts – including a coveted *WipeOut Pure* top – as well as a PSP rucksack. To stand a chance of winning, just answer the following question:

Q.Which of the following isn't a PSP game?
a) *Ridge Racers*
b) *Metal Gear Acid*
c) *Dave Harrison's Jamboree: Evolved*

Stick your entry on a postcard or in an envelope and send it to PSP Compo, GamesMaster, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Closing date is 28th February. Terms and conditions on page 113 apply.

You can never have too many T-shirts in the winter. And there's even a backpack to wear on your feet when the heating breaks down.

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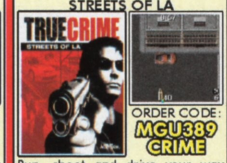

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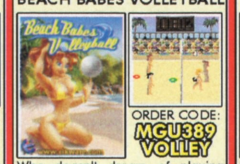

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THE GREATEST GAME POSTERS 2004

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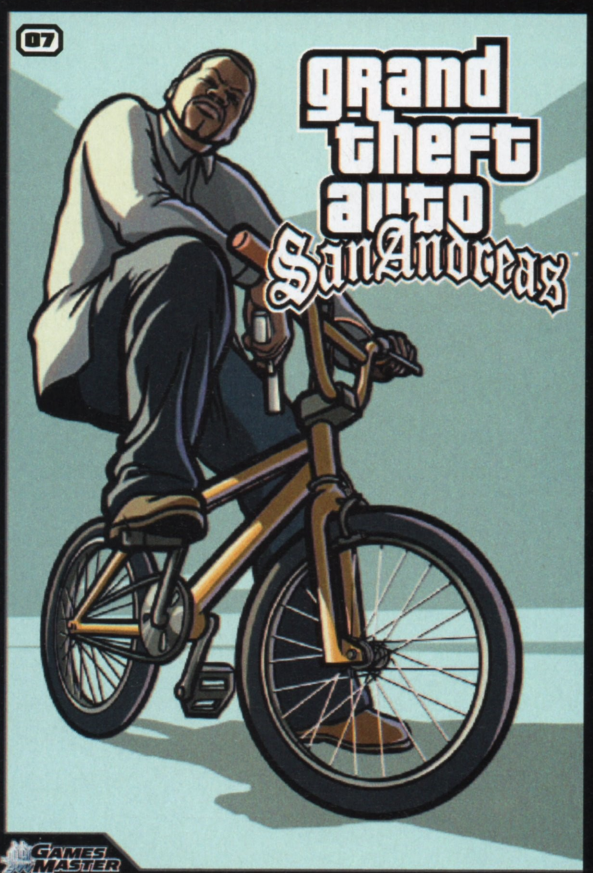

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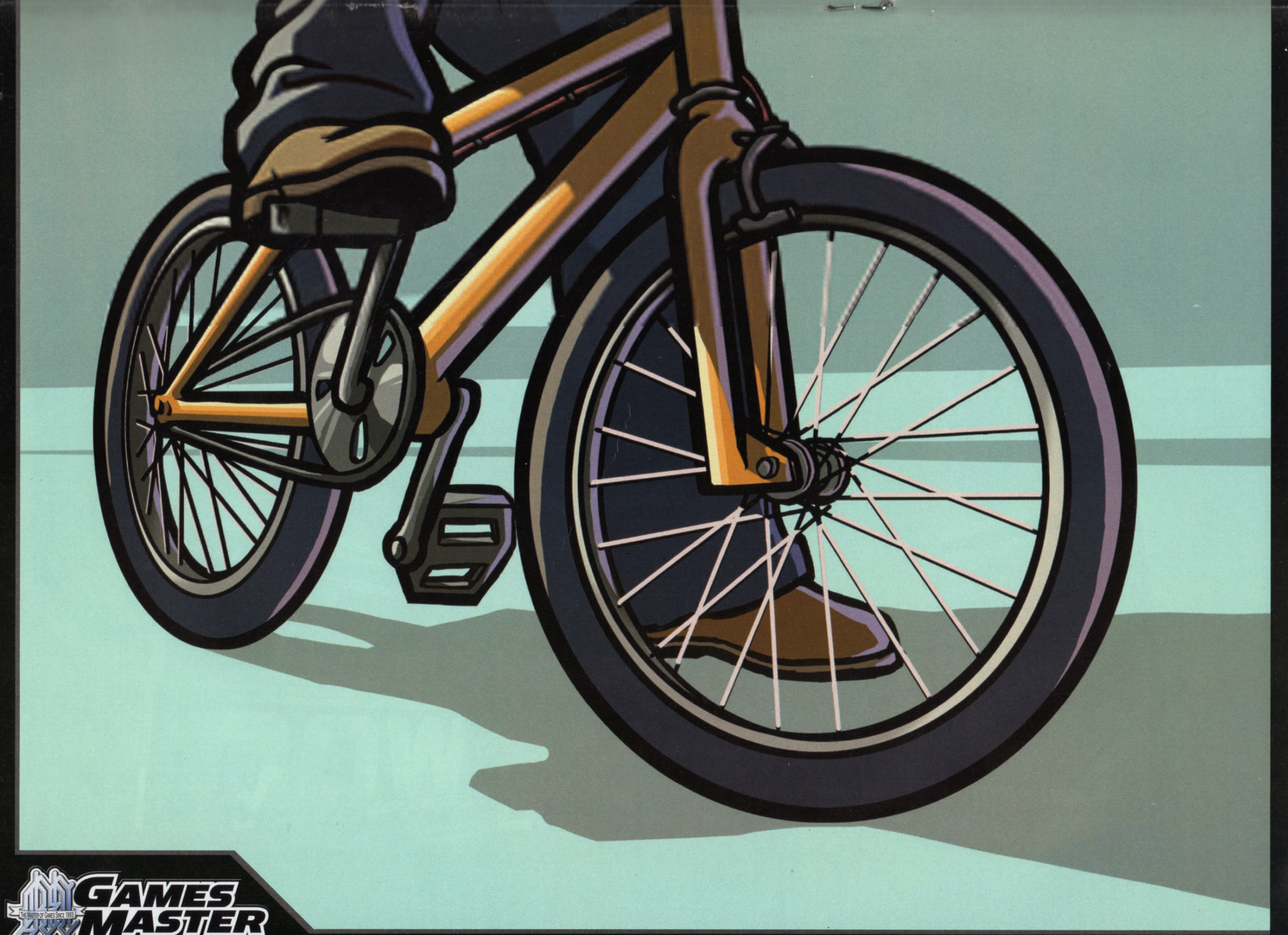
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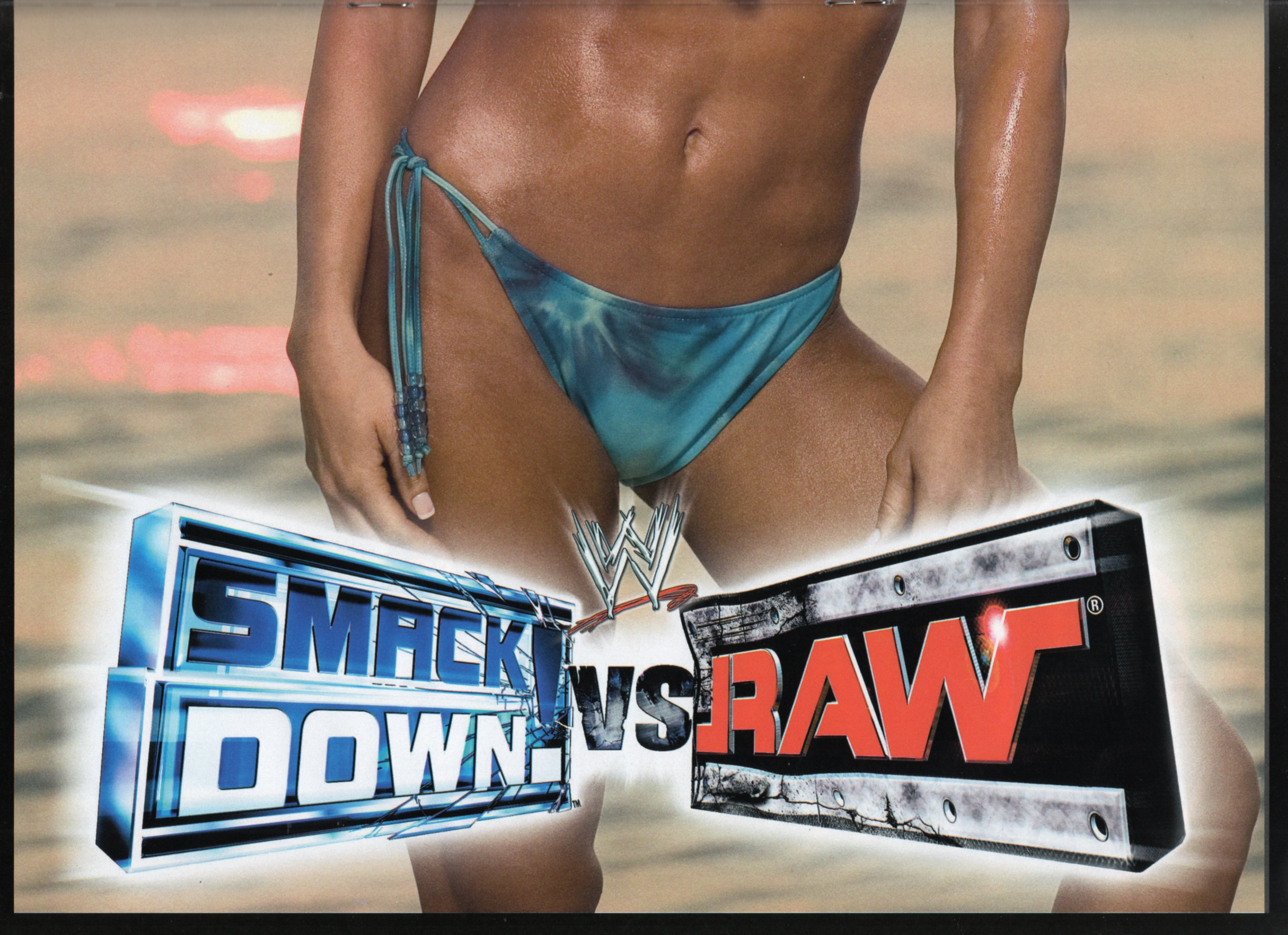
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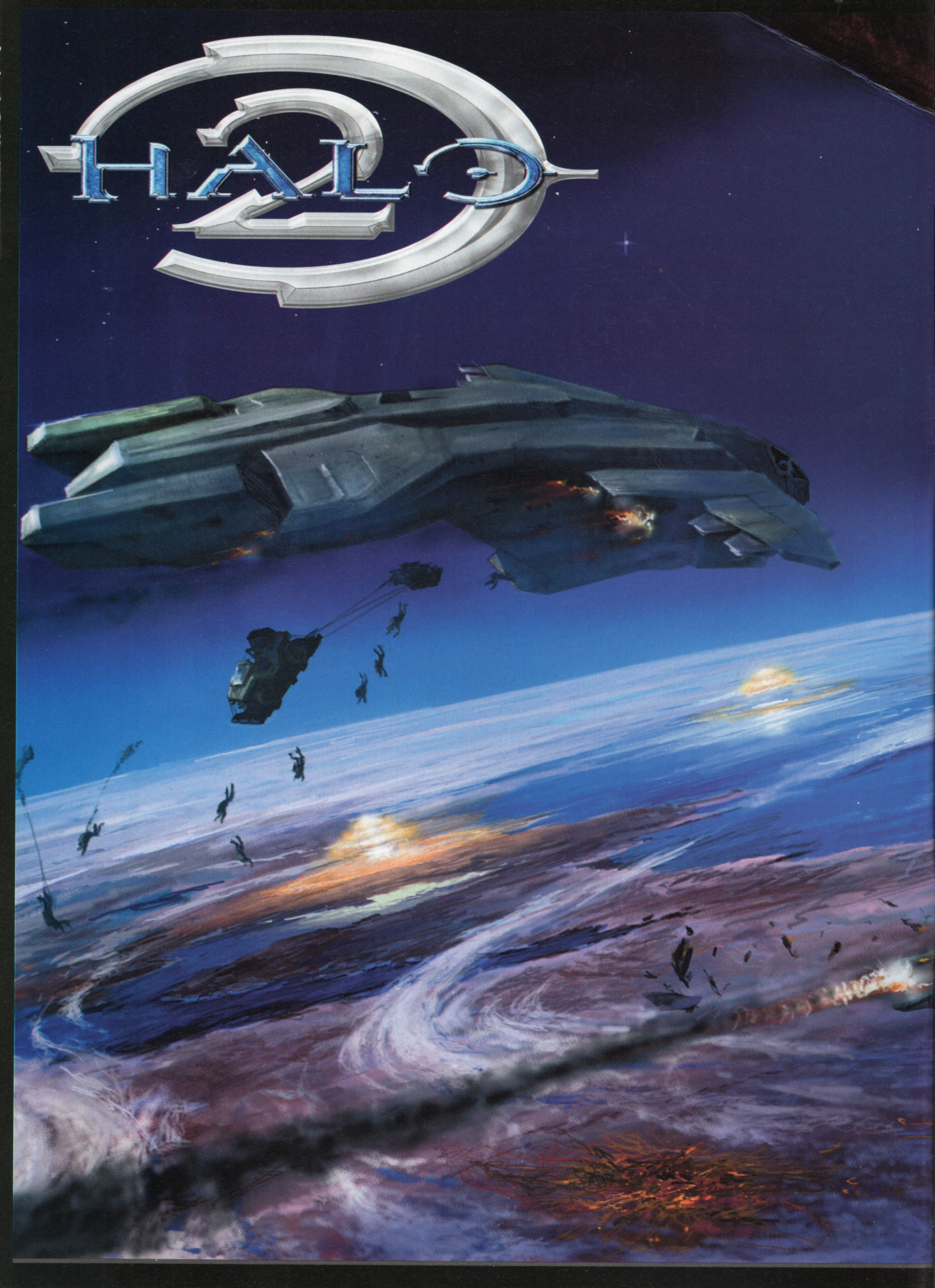
HALO 2

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GMail

We ♥ Games

Do you love games? You're in the right place. Welcome to the bit of *GM* that's stuffed to bursting point with your mail, game ideas, unreasonable demands - anything that shows how much we♥games. With a capital ♥!

EMAIL US: gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject heading GMail
WRITE TO US: GMail, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath. BA1 2BW.
TEXT US: Send GMAIL then your message to 84070. But keep it short!

RANT! RAVE! HAVE YOUR SAY! SEND US STUFF!

We want everything from fist-shaking rants to letters with little pictures of Pokémon on. And anything in between! Even poetry.

Mad? Bad? Sad? See how each letter writers feeling at a glance! Pleased Happy Ecstatic V. happy Frog Mad Unhappy Curious Sad Disappointed Angry Ranting Surprised Lost it Normal

Oirish Eyes Not Smiling

Dear *GM*, I am a reader of your mag and a loyal fan, but I want to talk about the lack of Irish games character. I'm not talking about jolly, Irish talking leprechauns or a drunk idiot. You get English spies, Afro-American gangstas, German/Russian baddies, fat Italian plumbers – even things from other planets get featured in games, but do you see any Irish characters? Nope, there's none, nada. So I'm begging – please don't shun the Irish people.

Brian O'Halloran, Ireland (surprisingly)

SPUD-TASTIC As Irish as Jack Charlton

Bejesus Brian! You're forgetting about Nina Williams from *Tekken*, who's getting her own game (*Death by Degrees*) and her sister Anna! They're as Irish as the O'Neill's pub chain! And surely everyone remembers *Tir Na Nog*, the Spectrum game that was steeped in Celtic mythology, featuring our hero Cuchulainn and his adventure through the Celtic underworld. Then there was *Leprechaun* and *Pot of Gold* which came out in 1982 which was... yeah, maybe you've got a point. Anyway, top of morning to yer – loved *The Commitments*.

Profit of Doom

Dear *GM*, I am writing to you to bring something to your attention. Loads of people enjoy games even if they're not original. Games like *San Andreas*, *Tekken 4* and *Wind Waker* may have had predecessors, but it doesn't make them rubbish, it makes them better in my opinion. I also want to mention the profit the games producers/designers make. It only costs them £2-2.50 to make a disc and they sell it for £40 in most shops.

Deilfraz Mahmood, Mitcham

In defence of games developers, not all of them ride around on push-bikes made of gold or wear diamond shorts. Partly because from that 40 quid you mention, the government, retailers and publishers all take a slice. Then you've got to consider that it takes money to make a game – employing a big team of very talented and skilled games designers for two years doesn't cost £2.50. Also for every million selling *FIFA* you get 20 plus games that sell 10 copies. Worldwide. There's money to be made in games, but lots of it goes to EA!

Thanks for the Memory

Dear *GM*, Isn't it amazing to think that about five years ago we were all huddled around MegaDrives trying to beat through the arcade-style games that seemed impossible to complete. But now there is a complete new era of consoles and games alike, I remember that on the MegaDrive

WIN!

If you're the Star Letter writer, you'll win the game of your choice on any format, courtesy of our mates at Britain's top games store - GAME. Get scribbling and you could be a winner!
gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk

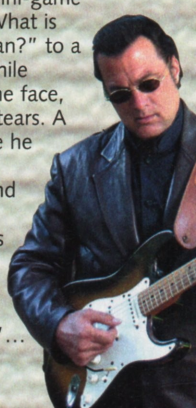
STAR LETTER!

Tubby, folk singing, movie 'star' should have own videogame

BrewHaHa *GM*, I would like to present you with an idea for a new game. A couple of friends and I are colossal Steven Seagal fans, and we feel that a game featuring the man himself would be one of the most manly gaming experiences that money could buy! Seagal would be best suited to being a stealth/ action/ shooter (probably third-person). Also, he should be made invulnerable to any attack when using those quick hands, and that a single boot would result in instant death to his foes. We were wondering your views on such a glorious game! You heard it here first!

Andy C, e-mail

Rumour has it that Steven Seagal was offered the part in *Onimusha 3* that Jean Reno finally took. Seagal turned it down as he (allegedly) had to tie some tassels to his jacket. You're totally right though, a game starring the piece of meat with eyes would rock, and could have the following features: It could... motion capture the strange slappy, shovey fighting style that he calls 'Aikido'. Have a slapsies mini-game where he asks "What is the essence of man?" to a bar room bully while slapping him in the face, reducing him to tears. A section where he thinks he's in *Mean Streets* and tries to act. A bit where he says "This is for my wife, **** you and die!"...



FANSITE OF THE MONTH

www.halobabies.net

You might want to look elsewhere for tips on dual-wielding or where to get the plasma sword on *Lockout*, but for comic strips featuring a big headed Master Chief – look no further! It's been running for about 18 months, and is based on an unfounded rumour of a *Halo*-babies game that circulated a few years ago. A comic strip was written to celebrate the rumour and it's grown from there. Genuinely funny and a tightly-designed website.

GMail Filter

We get sacks full of letters and an inbox straining with electronic mail every month on GM. Here's just a quick sampling of what we've been sent...

MOST DISTANT MESSAGE: ..... Ibeh Promise, Awolowo Road, Lagos, Nigeria (2974 miles)
STRANGEST E-MAIL SUBJECT HEADING: .....*Gone With the Wind* blown away by *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*
CHEEKIEST AND SHORTEST E-MAIL: .. 'Hi, please send me a network adapter.' (Why should we Maroun, why?)
LAZIEST SPELLING OF THE WORD THANKS: ..... Pank (courtesy of Daniel from Radlett)
DAFTEST ADDRESS: ..... Willey Lane, Cockerham (Lancaster)

BEST ART YOU SENT US

Anthony McNally's nod to Soul Calibur

BEST POSTCARD!

Steki Knight made this laminated Xbox tribute

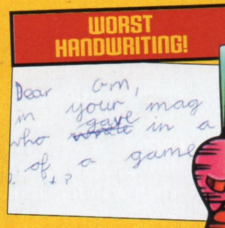
NICEST HANDWRITING!

Small but perfectly formed, S. Jared.

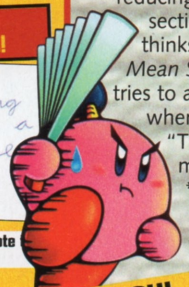
LONGEST STAMP

Amy Johnson's cheeky smile; courtesy of Hieron Shepherd.

WORST HANDWRITING!



No wonder they wrote this anonymously...



CHUBBY! PINK! Is Kirby Segal's game double?

We ♥ Really Games

Chatting with the people who've taken it all too far.

THIS MONTH: RYAN CLARK, 18, AND HIS MASSIVE LEGO METAL GEAR MODEL

GM: Don't tell us - it's *Metal Gear Rex*, right?

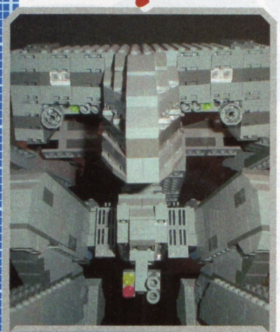
Ryan: This is version two. I did an early version that just didn't look right - it was full of missing parts. This one was based on a paper Rex model I found, and took months to make.

GM: Where does all that Lego come from?

Ryan: Mostly *Star Wars* Lego sets. There are two X-Wings, a Sith Infiltrator, a Snowspeeder and a bunch more in there. Around $200 of Lego in total.

GM: Any Fox-Hound agents been round to smash it?

Ryan: Ha. Only my cat. He tried to jump out of the window and fell right on Rex's railgun. Luckily he ran out before I could do anything I would have regretted.



Ryan and his Lego model like to colour-coordinate.

REALLY LOVE GAMES?

Then this could be you! Spent long evenings turning your love of games into something 3D? Send us the pics and you could be featured in the pages of *GM*! Really ♥ Games, Gamesmaster, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW. Everyone featured gets a free game!

there was no memory card. I never thought that it would be possible to save progress on a stick, but now I don't think I would be able to live without them. Or the next generation consoles.

Steven Pleasants, Sudbury

It's amazing progress. Who'd have thought 10 years ago you could take a picture on a phone?! Or send text messages via portable handsets? Maybe one day they'll create a device that allowed you actually speak to each... just imagine! And yeah, memory cards are okay, they provide a function, but why were you playing the MegaDrive five years ago? We were huddled round a Dreamcast. For warmth.

MEMORY GLAND

Aren't those dudes ace!

Out of Time

Dear *GM*, I love your mag completely, but I have noticed an error on the front cover of all the mags I've checked. I've noticed that you repeatedly put the wrong month. It's always two months too fast, every single one of them. My September one says November, and my October issue says December! C'mon guys, you've got to sort this out, it's embarrassing.

Jonathan Jones, Newport

List Of Demands

We've not afraid to say exactly what we want to see in our games.

Formula One Frustration

Dear GM, After playing on *Formula One 2004* on the PS2, I was totally disappointed! I wrote to the developers Studio Liverpool and suggested how to make their next F1 game better but I had no reply, which was totally out or order! So I'm writing to you, *GM*, to tell you my suggestions.

- Total customisation of all cars, drivers and tracks. For the drivers you can edit their skills, helmets and make them change team. For the cars – liveries and mechanical aspects of the car are needed.
- Improve the AI. In *F1 2004* there were no crashes at the start or jump start.
- Chants from the crowd.
- Have an AI opponent rating from one to 100.
- Even if you lose a wheel you should be able to try and make it back to the pits.
- In the Season mode you should have the option of being able to look at your rival drivers stats and profiles.

Paul Adams, Burnley

HELMETTED!

Customise the drivers!

MAKE YOUR LIST OF DEMANDS!

How would you make the next game in your favourite series better? Simply study computer science at university for three years, learn the C++ programming language and get a job at a top games developer. OR make your List of Demands so game creators have no more excuses for not fitting Lara with a proper support bra or putting monkeys in *GTA 4* right NOW! Send your demands to us at gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject List of Demands or to List of Demands, We♥Games, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. They WILL be made to learn.

GM's List Of DEMANDS

The ongoing *GTA* list

- The presence of God. If you're too bad, you're struck down by lightening
- Coast guards missions and life saving
- Self-catering
- Small business mode – complete with stocktaking, book balancing...
- Pogo sticks.
- Bike racks for cars.
- Caravans – mobile safe-houses
- Proper sit-down restaurants
- The ability to do magic tricks – to impress women and small children
- Headphones to listen to music when walking about.

Here's what *GM* would like to see in the next *Halo*.

- A better ending.

MY GAME IDEA

Everybody who loves games has got an idea for one. Fact. Here's where you get to share it with planet Earth. Well, the sub-section of planet Earth that reads *GM*. And when it comes to creative environments it's more like the planet Venus – an atmosphere of poisonous cynicism and crushing pressure. Only the very best game ideas can survive! But don't let that put you off.

SEND US YOUR GAME IDEAS

It's easy. Don't bother drawing us a 50 page design document (unless you want to) – we know that creative game geniuses are busy people. Instead:

1. TELL US WHAT YOUR GAME IS
2. TELL US HOW IT PLAYS
3. DRAW US A SCREEN SHOT

GOT A GAME IDEA?

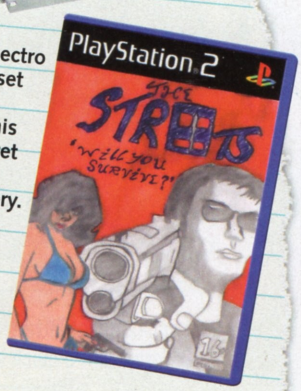
And remember it's all about the idea. Not how well you can draw. Any ideas making it into We♥Games gets an item of collectable gaming merchandise from around the office. And if we run out of them, the pick of our stationary cupboard. The highlighters are very good. Send everything to My Game Idea, We♥Games, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Or email it (with your screen shot) to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk with My Game Idea as the subject. And when you're hailed as the next Shigsy, remember us when we ask for an interview.

THE STREETS

Copyright Matt Tebbutt, Dublin

WHAT IS IT

Not to be confused with Mike Skinner's electro Pam Ayres act, this is third-person action set on 'the streets' of London town. Our hero, Tony Stevens, is trying to figure just why his family has disappeared, but first he must get some money together and make the necessary connections to unravel the mystery.



HOW IT PLAYS

This is a free-roaming, open ended game that allows you to define your own Tony Stevens. You follow a *GTA* route of taking on jobs for local gangs, or you could become a legitimate business man and let your money do the talking.

POTENTIAL BEST BIT

Going to one of London's pubs, drink all day, lose all your money, influence and connections, then end up becoming a tramp. Live the dream!

JUDGEMENT

- Borrows heavily from *GTA* and *The Getaway*, but offers far more freedom. Also, there seems to be more moral choices - thumbs up for the option to do things honestly. Crime doesn't always pay.

QUOTE FOR THE BOX:
'GREAT GANGSTERS! SUPER-TRAMPS!'

NB: Rockstar and Activision might be saying something to their lawyers regarding the cover art.

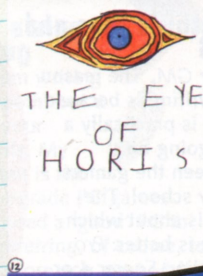
THE EYE OF HORIS

Copyright James Wilson, County Durham

PlayStation 2

WHAT IS IT

Adventure game starring a kid called John, who has to collect three ancient Egyptian artefacts after finding the magic Ring of Osirus. He has to battle against the Scorpion King and his henchmen, called Horis.



HOW IT PLAYS

Part action, part use of magic powers or something, but we mainly found James' game interesting for two reasons. Firstly, we were impressed with his knowledge of Ancient Egypt, until we realised it's all based on film *The Mummy*. Secondly ,we found out James is nine years old, and yet he's rated his own game a 12. So legally he can't play his own game. Which is a shame.

JUDGEMENT

Excellent use of Egyptian! *The Mummy* mythology, you just need to let us a bit more about the game – like gameplay, graphics, sound etc. And don't make it illegal for yourself to buy it.

QUOTE FOR THE BOX:
"IT'S YOUR JUST DESERTS! HERE'S SAND IN YOUR EYE! OF HORIS."

POTENTIAL BEST BIT

Chucking small fireballs at the Scorpion King with the Sceptre of Ra. Always a crowd pleaser.

OFFICE CAM COMPO!

Due to overwhelming demand we've rolled over our compo from last issue to give you one more chance to win our tat, sorry, highly collectable gaming merchandise. Simply answer this question: how do you spell the Ed's surname? Send your answer to gamesmaster@futurenet.co.uk, subject Office Cam Compo or to Office Cam Compo at the usual address. Good luck!

WIN! OUR TAT!

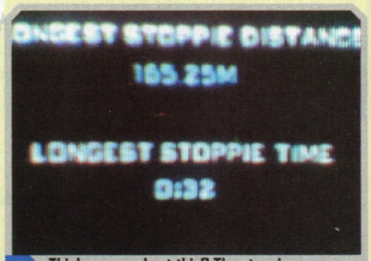
THE TAT IN FULL:

1. *Port Royale 2* t-shirt 2. Part Candies 3. *Vegas Make It Big* cocktail shake (no lid) 4. Donkey Kong and judo bloke 5. Light up drinks coaster 6. Squirty toilet seat joke 7. IR micro racer (might not work) 8. Pokémon magic wand toy from Japan.

Stoppie Madness

Hi GM, My names Paul and I love reading your magazine just as much i love playing *GTA: San Andreas,* and I have just done a THIRTY TWO second stoppie. I'm wondering if this is a record and whether you'll start a competition to see who can get the longest stoppie. Look forward to checking your next issue to see if you start one.

Paul Henry, Aberdeenshire



Think you can beat this? The stoppie challenge starts right here.

Good and indeed, grief. Consider the Stoppie challenge to have started NOW! Dave's just done a four second stoppie. Lets have a slow round of applause for Dave. Can you beat Paul Henry (not literally) at stoppies?

Brown blob discovered in *San Andreas*

Dear *GM*, I know a lot of internet sites were offering £50 for the first screenshots of Bigfoot on *GTA: San Andreas*, but I thought my favourite magazine should get the first shot and story... I looking in the countryside with no luck, so I climbed Mount Chiliad in search of the beast but couldn't get to the top. So I hijacked a plane at Los Santos Airport and flew to the very top of the mountain, parachuted and landed on one of the top peaks. After 10 minutes of hunting I decided he wasn't at the top, so I ran down the hill and spotted him walking about in a grassy patch at the bottom! I tried to get CJ's camera out and take a pic of him but the game wouldn't let me. As I started to get close to him he walked to a steep bit of the mountain, so I decided to wallop him with my spade, then take a picture of him. I took my camera phone and photographed the TV screen. I can describe him as having hairy arms and legs, but hairless feet and

Look it's Bigfoot. Apparently. Presumably behind the big brown mound.

Yeah, Gollum. Or maybe Phil Collins. Or perhaps just one of the hicks from Whetstone

chest, and it's about the same size as CJ. I also found Gollum from *Lord of the Rings* on the top of the mountain. Please see the pictures for proof. I believe I am the first person to find, kill and photograph the beast!

Joseph Smith, Manchester

Joe. We want to believe you. Honestly we do! We've studied your picture for hours/minutes and we still can't workout what you've hit with a spade. Which bit is the head? And the body? We get the Gollum thing, as he's the shirtless guy knocking about the countryside, but Bigfoot? We won't be calling off the search just yet.

Tram Fisted

Dear *GM*, I have seen in magazines that in *San Andreas* you can steal trams, but in *San Fierro* where the trams are, I found out that you can't. I have followed one around for ages, but it has never stopped. Do you know if you can steal them or if Rockstar have taken it out of the game? You said you couldn't think of anything that Rockstar could do to improve *SA,* but I disagree. At the start of the game I had $10 and I had to go to Binco to get some new clothes, I walked past racks of clothes saying 'Five shirts for 99c' but when I went to the changing rooms I couldn't afford anything! Buying clothes would be quicker and easier if you went up to a rack of clothes and tried stuff on, rather than faffing around in changing rooms.

From Max Iles, Aberdeenshire

You're right about the trolley cars – you can only stand on top of the them. The whole wardrobe interface could be snappier, so could buying stuff in Ammunation. But you're right about the sale offer. Some of those prices in Bincos take the mick – $100 for High–Top Sneaks! It makes the time you blow $8000 on a Crowex all the sweeter.

Meching a fool of yourself

Dear *GM*, Can you remember that huge Xbox controller thing for the *Mech* games? What a load of crap! I mean it cost 150 odd quid and you can use it with one game! I feel sorry for anyone who got it. I mean, peripherals that you can use with games nowadays are such a gimmick. Eye-Toy and SingStar are okay because the camera and the mics are included in the price, which is fair. What's it going to be next? An arsenal of plastic weapons for the next *GTA* game? I say stick to the good old light gun! And why do my letters never get printed?

Derek Stewart

We believe you're referring to the Steel Battalion control pad – it made us feel tough and like we lived in the future. Yeah, we felt like a futuristic tough man. To be fair we got ours for free; if we shelled £150 we would have felt tough and futuristic, but poor. As a rule, peripherals have to be pretty special to beat the official joypad, whatever the console. It keep it pure, keep it dual analogue. Peace out.

THINGS TO MAKE AND DO!

Every issue we set you a different mission deep into creative territory. Try not to spit too much with this one!

THIS MONTH'S TASK...

Tricky one this month. You have to spell a well-known sound effect from a videogame. For instance this is the sound of the Spiderman webbing his way through Manhattan: Thwip-schoooossch!

HERE'S A FEW OTHERS...

Aieeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee–thrumple-creck
Lara Croft hitting the ground following a long fall.

Veruuum-thwunk-crank-crumble-hugheeeerr
Master Chief getting hit by a jeep

Tap-tap-tap–plod-plod-plod-splatch
Distraction followed by a first level kill in *Manhunt*.

HAIKU COMP!

There's still time to write us a game haiku and win, if not big, at least medium sized. Haikus are a Japanese form of poetry; consisting of 3 lines of 17 syllables in a 5-7-5 formation. So the first line will contain five syllables, the second seven, and the third five again. See last ish for some examples. Write us one and send it to the usual address labelled Haiku? Bless You! or to: games mester@futurenet.co.uk.

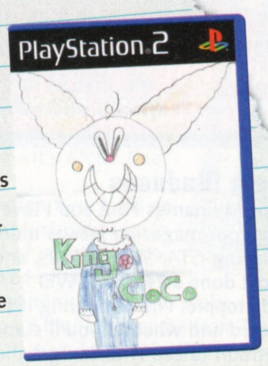
ONES TO TRY

Samus curling up into a metallic-sphere and rolling around.
Wall run over spiked floor in Prince of Persia.
Rayman getting his teeth kicked in by a couple of skinheads.
Send 'em all in to us at Things to Make & Do at the usual address.

We ♥ Games

King Coco

Copyright David Quington, South Shields



What is it

King CoCo is an evil killer clown that has escaped the circus. As he's evil and a killer, he takes it on himself to take over the land of the Kouros, by driving around in his souped up clown mobile killing Town mayors! You couldn't make it up!

How it plays

It's an action/adventure that exploits CoCo's unique arsenal of weapons which includes a toy hammer, a water squirting flower, custard pies and a unicycle. How these actually kill mayors we've yet to figure out, but they can be upgraded by visiting local circuses. You could take in the show.

Judgement

Short on detail, gratuitously violent and one dimensional in terms of gameplay. But it includes a psychotic clown, which makes it a Triple A game in our eyes.

Potential

Best bit

Laying siege to a town in CoCo's Clown-mobile which has a boxing glove on a spring. Ooh, deadly.

Quote for the box:
"Imagine *Manhunt* starring Ronald McDonald. But better!"

Tolstoy's War and PES

Dear *GM*, The reason I'm writing is because there is practically a war going on between the gamers in my school. The feud is about which game is better: *Pro Evolution Soccer 4* or *FIFA 2005*. I personally think that *PES4* is the better game. I have played both games and even though *PES4* doesn't have all the licenses, I still think it outshines *FIFA*. Please tell me that I have an argument worth fighting for!

Gareth Davies, Treorchy

It's always worth fighting for what you believe in, whether it's politics, the quality of a videogame or whether Kit Kats should be a classed as a chocolate bar (when obviously it's a wafer biscuit). It's always good to know that you're fighting with truth on your side as *PES4* is a better game than *FIFA*. Anybody who thinks different is either dumb or trying to get themselves attention.

Window Collina
This man thinks PES is better.

Ivan idea!

Hello GM. My name is Ivan. I own a large property in Teesdale in County Durham. It has 14 high-end bedrooms, a car park and a restaurant and high-speed internet connection. I am considering the idea of turning it into a gaming break and holiday centre were people can come in groups and use the most up to date machines to play the latest games on huge plasma screens. I would appreciate it if you could tell me if any one else is already doing it and if you think that it would be a good venture? Thank you.

Ivan Becker Carter

It's an interesting idea though with online gaming growing so fast do people need to get together like this to play multi-player games? But come on GM readers, let us know if you think Ivan's videogaming Butlins stands a chance!

Xboxing Clever

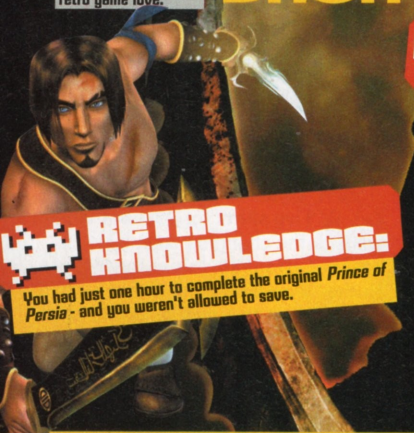
Dear *GM*, I'm tired of everything being biased against the Xbox, yes it's a

We ♥ Old Games

We're blowing the grime of time off the games of yesteryear.

With Mark Green from his caravan of retro game love.

Back in time: Prince of Persia



Retro Knowledge:

The young Mechner got his dad to write the music for *Prince of Persia*.

Retro Knowledge:

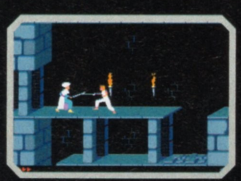
You had just one hour to complete the original *Prince of Persia* - and you weren't allowed to save.

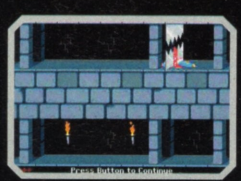
Prince of Persia

1989, Apple 2

Student Jordan Mechner filmed his brother leaping about in his pyjamas, spent four years turning him into an Arabian princess-rescuer blessed with buttery-smooth acrobatic skills - and gave birth to a legend.

- Alternately hauling himself up onto platforms and tumbling onto spikes, this prince inspired the lady Lara.

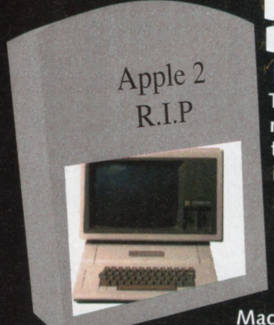




Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

Golden clock-fiddling update from Ubisoft, guided by the Mechner man himself.

Console Graveyard



Apple 2 (1977-1986)

The UK fell in love with its native rubber-keyed ZX Spectrum, but the US went for the Apple 2 instead – the first real home computer, and the iPod outfit's first product. Sold millions as new versions ran through the alphabet of baby letters (IIc, IIe, IIg...), but died when Macintosh and PC stomped in.

Distinguishing features: An annoying habit of spelling itself with square brackets (Apple][)

Innovations: Computing on your telly • PC-style add-on cards • First spreadsheet software

Now: eBay has them for $15 (US). There's more at www.apple2history.org.

3 great games:

- *Ultima*: Early RPG – with space shooting bit! – that spawned a super-sized saga.
- *Lode Runner*: Timeless baddie-burying platformer. So many ladders.
- *Castle Wolfenstein*: WW2 stealther that inspired iD's *Wolfenstein 3D*.

Loading...

Ultimate (ZX Spectrum, 1983-1985)

Moons ago, Rare (*Conker*, *Grabbed by the Ghoulies*) called itself Ultimate Play The Game - and served up out some corking games starring chefs, robots and men in hats. Impatiently waiting for each new classic to load was made (slightly) more bearable by knockout pixel-art versions of the pics on Ultimate's moody black game boxes.

BIG WINNER! Now there's a sexy box!

big console but who cares?! Most people don't carry their consoles around much, it performs much better than any console, it has a hard-drive and the best online service. I constantly have to defend the Xbox against all the PS2 fanboys in my school, and when I prove them wrong with facts they just ignore it and go on about the size of the Xbox controller. Then there are the arguments about the PS2 having better games than the Xbox, hardly! Most of PS2's good games come out on Xbox too as they are multi-format. The only thing PS2 has on Xbox is *GTA: SA*. Fanboys go on about how much the PS2 has sold, but that's because it has a massive potential user-base thanks to the PSone success. Hardcore gamers should either play PC games or, if not that, Xbox games.

Stephen Baker, County Down, Ireland

That one or two year head start might be responsible for the PS2's success but you could argue that it's peaked, while the Xbox is just getting into its stride. Looking at the quality of exclusive games for each console, the Xbox has had *Riddick*, *Halo 2* and *Fable* while for the PS2 only *San Andreas* stands out. Be patient Stephen, your crowing time will come. Those original pads were fat though...

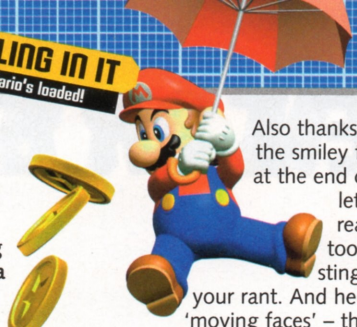
MASKING FOR IT A Half-Life 'moving face'

PC gamer swings his handbag

Dear *GM*, I am writing this letter to point out a few flaws in your reviewing skills. My biggest concern is the way you downgrade PC games because you need a 'good' PC to play it. I am referring, of course, to the joke of a score you gave *Half-Life 2*, 96%. The fact remains that *Half-Life 2* is a MUCH better game that *Halo 2*, and yet *Halo 2* scored 95%. *Halo 2* isn't a bad, but it isn't worthy to have a score that close to *Half-Life 2*. *Halo 2* played online is a laggy mess and single-player isn't much better. I'm sure some PC gamers will agree with me. Admit that *Half-Life 2* is the better than both *Halo 2* and *GTA: SA* or I will go down there and take the crayon that you use to write this mess of a magazine. Could you put me in the magazine to argue my case because I know nobody takes criticism well. =D

Ian Monteith, e-mail

Hi Ian, thanks for the feedback.



ROLLING IN IT Look - Mario's loaded!

Also thanks for the smiley face at the end of the letter, really took the sting out your rant. And here's to 'moving faces' – the future of games.

Stinge-tendo

Yo *GM*, Here are my view about Xbox and GameCube. First, I think that Nintendo have made some huge mistakes regarding the GameCube and advertising. Have you ever seen a GameCube game advertised on TV? Me neither. I have a GameCube and it's brilliant, but how much money do you think Ninty have made compared to Sony and Microsoft? Not a lot! Just by some simple advertising, PS2 and Xbox have made their developers a stack of money. Nintendo have slipped behind in the console race because of no online mode. PS – Love the mag. PPS – PS2s are stupid!

Luke Elton, Durham, via e-mail

Nintendo are not a poor company. They've made the biggest selling format of all time – the GameBoy. If they wanted to they could they could bombard us with adverts. We're confident they'll do so for the DS, but trying to second guess Nintendo is impossible. While Sony and Microsoft know a lot about marketing, Nintendo know a lot about games. So while they're erratic with their promotion, you can always rely on them for brilliant videogames.

WE WANT YOUR JOB!

Pestering the jammiest jobsmiths in the games biz.

"Hello?"

GamesMaster here. Who's in our ear?

"Mark-Philipp Hugo. I'm Assistant Manager of the Product Analysis team at Nintendo."

So you get to play top-secret Nintendo games all day?

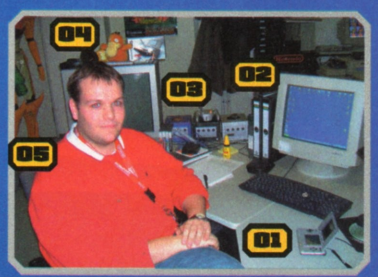
"We give feedback on our products to Japan in terms of quality and suitability."

And you get *paid* to do this?

"We also give licensed developers and publishers unbiased feedback on their games through various stages of development."

Nice. Do you get free cola and back rubs, too?

"Goodbye!" Hmph.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

01 Nintendo DS - "We're at full gear preparing for the launch of DS in Europe this year."
02 Folders aplenty - "Filled with all kinds of material regarding European age ratings."
03 Consoles - "Four GameCubes. A UK one, a US/Japanese one, and two NR Readers (which play development discs)"
04 Pokémon - "Psyduck is my favourite Pokémon - because I have headaches, too."
05 Life-size Samus figure - "It's a life-size Samus figure."

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2: THE SHADOW AND THE FLAME

1994, PC

The Prince meets a imposter, and the prequel's black background curtain is lifted to reveal ancient Arabia in all its glory. More platforms and puzzles, with enemies who'd learnt to work together.

■ '90s-era PC speakers burst into crackly life with a narrator that was the direct forerunner of *Sands of Time*'s own.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

1999, PC

A dodgy go at extending the prince's platforming into Dimension Three. Looked the business for the turn of the century, but it was clobbered by sticky controls and more bugs than *I'm A Celebrity...*

■ Slicing a guard's head off with the Prince's pointy utilities - In 3D? And you thought *Warrior Within* did it first...

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE WARRIOR WITHIN

New grumpier Prince flees from death at the hands of miffed time monster.

YOU DON'T KNOW YOU'RE BORN!

MULTI-LOADING: '80s computers had as much storage space as a hamster's cheek – so at the end of every level, you had to sit and wait for the next one to load from tape. And when you ran out of lives? 'Rewind Tape to Level 1'. We suffered.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

BUBSY THE BOBCAT

Smarmy Super Nintendo feline who nicked all his platforming tricks from Sonic, and *never shut up*.

"WHERE IS HE NOW?":

Pestering his agent for a cameo scratching Steve O's left buttock in *Wildboys*.

TOP CAT? NO. Bubsy's currently 'resting'

GET READY FOR

GRAN TURISMO® 4

THE REAL DRIVING SIMULATOR

GRAN TURISMO® 4

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REVIEWS

GAMES MASTER

✔EVERY GAME ✔EVERY FORMAT ✔EVERY MONTH

KATH BRICE

REVIEWS ED

We've covered all bases in this month's reviews section. Anyone who wants to let off a bit of steam after the niceties of Christmas might want to check out *Shadow of Rome* - Capcom's super gory gladiatorial game. For good clean family fun, we've got the bongo bashing *Donkey Kong: Jungle Beat*. Or for a spot of, um, wrestling relief there's *Rumble Roses*, which proves that not everyone covers up in the winter, particularly not female mud wrestlers. Something for everyone. Read on...

p74

CONSOLE GAME OF THE MONTH!

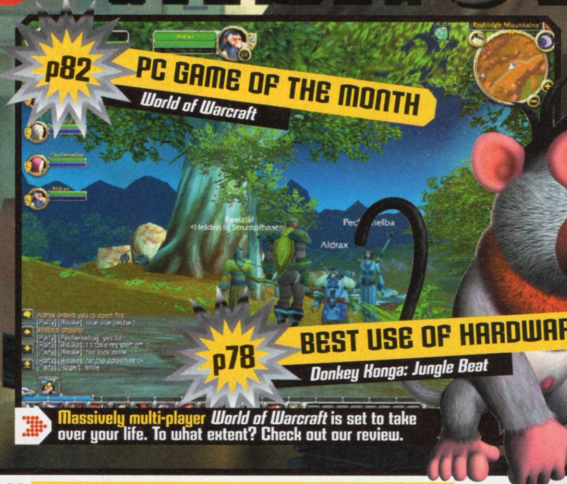
Mercenaries

MERCENARIES

GM GUARANTEE

Only *GM* has reviews you can trust. This is why...

- We play and judge games on every format. We're not biased to any particularly machine. We're just biased towards good games.
- We only review finished code.
- We only use expert, experienced game players who know what they're talking about.
- We're 100% independent and honest. If a game's bad, we'll say so.
- We show and tell you more about a game than any other mag or web site. No one else crams as much in.
- Games are expensive. We want to make sure you never buy a bad one.



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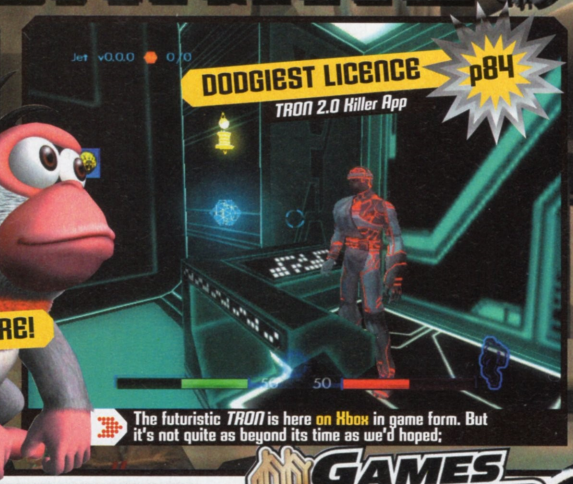
PC GAME OF THE MONTH

World of Warcraft



p84

DODGIEST LICENCE

TRON 2.0 Killer App

p78

BEST USE OF HARDWARE!

Donkey Konga: Jungle Beat

Massively multi-player *World of Warcraft* is set to take over your life. To what extent? Check out our review.

The futuristic *TRON* is here on Xbox in game form. But it's not quite as beyond its time as we'd hoped.

HOW GM'S REVIEWS WORK

Here's a guided tour around the only reviews you should trust.

Other Formats
You might like
GBA Link To The Past/Four Swords, The original Zelda co-op, in handheld form. 95%
Or try these:
PS2 Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance 2 ....88%
PS2 Final Fantasy XI 80%

Game not reviewed on your console? Check out this box to see how the other versions are coming on, or for the most similar game you can play on your machine right now.

It's crunch time. Here's where you'll find the real deal for every game. Each title is rigorously assessed in three disciplines:

GRAPHICS: What does it look like? Does it move smoothly? Enough variety?

GAMEPLAY: Does the game work? Is it satisfying and fun to play, or a pain in the arse?

LIFESPAN: Is there enough of it? Will you be playing this title for months or mere minutes?

The best and worst things about the game dragged out and held at bullet point!

The final verdict in one snappy soundbite, with the only score that counts at its side. Trust no other number!

JUDGEMENT JES

GM LOVES
- The best co-operative game on the 'Cube and a perfect argument for connectivity
- Brilliant puzzles that aren't too difficult
- A cracking adventure for the single player

GM HATES
- It's a very expensive game to play properly - you'll need four GBAs and link cables for four players
- It looks like a GBA game a lot of the time

GRAPHICS 81%
Cute GBA-type sprites mixed with marvellous special effects.

GAMEPLAY 90%
Amazing co-operative gameplay and some ingenious puzzles.

LIFESPAN 90%
As a multi-player it could last for months, but not so long on your own.

OVERALL
89%
Play with three mates with GBA's, and you've got one of the best games on the 'Cube.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: ...Final Fantasy Origins, 83%
WORSE THAN: ...Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker, 97%
WAIT FOR: ...The new 'adult' Zelda
BEST PRICE: ...£29.99, amazon.co.uk

REVIEWS: • OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GC • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • SPECIAL: GBA, LINK CABLE • OTHER FORMATS: GBA • CALL: 01932 895390 • PLAYERS: 1-4

WHAT IS IT?
Brilliant puzzle-laden four-player Zelda action that uses GBA connectivity.
• Two game modes • Endless Adventure and Shadow battle
• Four character formations

HOW IT PLAYS
You may not believe me, but I'm a former castle guard! A professional adventurer.

IN GAME CLIP: The first five minutes of play. Learn the ropes, kill monsters, burn grass!

Find out if the game's on your machine. We'll show every format it's set for, with the arrow showing you which version we've reviewed.

Your 'at a glance' guide to the game and its main features. First-person or third-person? How many levels? Bosses? You'll find it here.

Your instant look at some in-game action so you know how it plays. If it's a slower strategy game we'll show you how it all works.

Still undecided after reading the review? This box tells you about anything better or worth waiting for, and the cheapest place to buy it.

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

GM's badge of gaming greatness is only given to classic games. If a game gets one of these it's an essential purchase.

THE SCORE

90 TO 100%
Tippety top cream of the crop. If you own the console, buy this!

80 TO 90%
A great game. If you like the sound of it, you should get it in.

70 TO 80%
Neat enough but a little lacking. Still, if you really must have it...

60 TO 70%
A game scuppered by an annoying flaw or two. Shame.

50 TO 60%
Above average but only just. Spend your cash elsewhere.

40 TO 50%
Quite simply not very good. We played it - we didn't like it.

30 TO 40%
Oh dear. Perhaps the programmers should play some 'games'.

20 TO 30%
What the...?! This looks awful and plays awful as well.

10 TO 20%
Not a videogame at all but a device of mental torture.

0 TO 10%
Like dangling your diddlies in a mincing machine.

p88
GORIEST GAME!
Shadow of Rome
GLADIATOR'S BOOTY
SALVO POINTS REQUIRED: 15000
Heads roll, quite literally, in Shadow of Rome. And explode, and get split in two...
WORST BEAT 'EM UP
Capcom Fighting Jam
p92
p80
MOST NAKED FLESH!
Rumble Roses
p81
WORST EYETOY GAME EVER!
Spongebob Squarepants: Movin' With Friends
Yep - it really is as dull as Kath's face implies.
BEST SEQUEL
Viewtiful Joe 2
p94
p90
BEST HANDHELD GAME!
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django
SUN
Provided you've got access to some sunlight, Boktai 2 is the greatest handheld game of the month. If you haven't got sun, it's rubbish.

Axis and Allies PC 96
Beyblade Revolution GBA 86
Boktai 2: Solar Boy Django GBA 90
Capcom Fighting Jam PS2 XBOX 92
Donkey Konga: Jungle Beat CUBE 78
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events
PS2 XBOX CUBE PC 81
Megaman X8 PS2 86
Mercenaries PS2 XBOX 74
Metal Slug Advance GBA 92
Pathway to Glory NGAGE 96
Rumble Roses PS2 80
Shadow of Rome PS2 88
Shark Tale GBA 96
Sid Meier's Pirates PC 96
Spongebob Squarepants: Movin' With Friends PS2 81
Top Spin PC 96
TRON 2.0: Killer App XBOX PC 84
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue GBA 96
Viewtiful Joe 2 CUBE 94
World of Warcraft PC 82

• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC STUDIOS
• PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: XB • CALL: 01753 756100 • PLAYERS: 1

THE LOWDOWN

The long-awaited free-roaming soldier of fortune game from the *Battlefront* boys.

- More than 30 vehicles
- More than 30 weapons
- Ten air support options.

IN GAME CLIP:

The lovely Fiona 'jacks a tank in her own special way – by killing everyone inside it.

MERCENARIES

The best things in life aren't free, got that?

18

SHHH!

An example of money-grabbing Merc-think – we've been offered 50k to take out two commanders, but we can double our dollars if do it on the hush-hush.

A bullet in his helmet from half a mile away, and nobody's the wiser.

But target two makes it to a chopper. Not to worry – we've packed for every occasion...

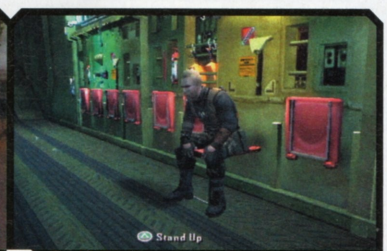
That's the end of our softly-softly bonus, but at least the target's copped it.

IN IT FOR THE MONEY

There are three characters, each with their own strengths. As you'll notice, we favour Fiona, the Brit – she's good at the stealthy stuff, and has a nice voice.

This bloke's your typical yank – stupid bandana, too keen on cracking jokes.

Fiona's our kind of lady – she's ruthlessly efficient, and looks like Lucy Liu.



The big Swede soaks up bullets like a dead cow, but it's hard to take his beard seriously.

Let's get this straight. Whatever you may have heard, *Mercenaries* is not *GTA* in a war zone. *GTA* focuses on plot: *Mercenaries* – apart from some chutney about the Deck Of 52 – doesn't. *GTA* has voiceovers from half a dozen A-List actors – *Mercenaries* features former *Home And Away* star Melissa George as voice 'talent'. *GTA* has radio stations, barbers, strippers, basketball, BMXs, chatty pedestrians and arcade games: *Mercenaries* doesn't. What it does have, though, are helicopters that can bomb a building flat in under ten seconds. Still interested? Read on.

Really, the main similarity between the two is their philosophy. Sure, you 'jack cars, but it goes deeper than that – both games give you a mission outline, then leave the rest up to you. And, with *Mercenaries*' selection of kit, that leaves a pretty broad range of options. Say you're tasked with destroying a missile silo – do you nick a North Korean transport and drive through the front gate, plant some C4 and retreat to a safe distance? Plough the fences down in an Allied APC, then take the silo down with a barrage of rockets? Or just find a convenient hill, call in an airstrike and watch the carnage with a cup of tea and a biscuit? It all comes down to money – how much you want to earn and how much you're prepared to spend. Some missions offer bonus cash for being completed faster or silently, but that could involve investing in some anti-tank rockets or a sniper rifle.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

The Russian Mafia will airdrop anything from medikits to tanks for a price, although it'll set you back an extra $25 grand if the LZ's still hot, and their chopper gets shot down. For the flush merc, the options are even broader – if

FEEDBACK

These guys have also made

Star Wars: The Clone Wars	73%
Army Men: RTS	56%
Escape from Monkey Island	90%
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter	71%

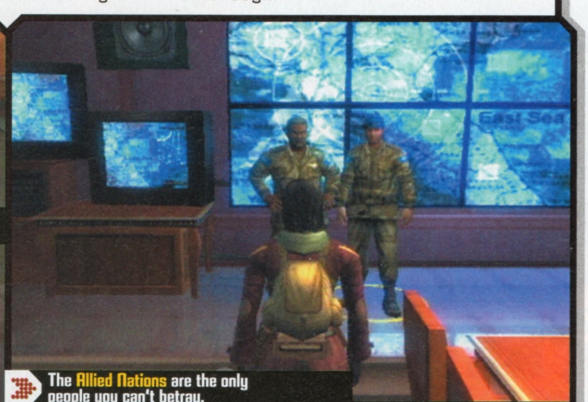
WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE...

There are five main factions in the game, but only the Allies and North Koreans are good guys and bad guys. Everyone else bases how much they like you on, erm, whether you've been shooting them. Fair enough.

South Koreans are mates with the A.N. Handy as back-up.

The mafia are all about profit – they'll buy any vehicles you nick.

North Koreans are always the enemy – they won't shoot if you disguise yourself with an N.K. vehicle.



The Allied Nations are the only people you can't betray.

You'll get in trouble with the Chinese. They hate everyone.

And then there are civilians. They exist to give you cars. Pity them.

AIRSTRIKE!

You're pinned down by a squad of North Koreans, and they're really dug in. Time to get on the blower...

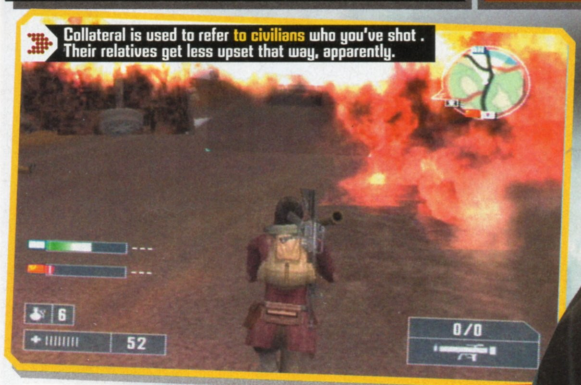
One call to base later, and we've got a satellite lock at our disposal. Time to re-purpose some hardware.

Twenty seconds later, a plane flies overhead and lobs a smattering of bombs into the Koreans.

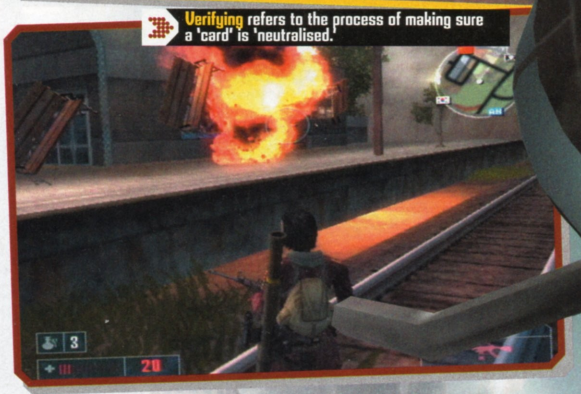
And they're toast. Shame they managed to blow your support plane out of the sky – but hey, them's the risks.

TALKIN' THE TALK

The US military insist on coming up with fluffy terms for genocide – so shooting your own troops is called 'friendly fire'.



Collateral is used to refer to civilians who you've shot. Their relatives get less upset that way, apparently.



Verifying refers to the process of making sure a 'card' is 'neutralised.'

you've got $50 grand to spare, why not splurge and take down that pesky North Korean unit with a cluster bomb? Making the heavy artillery option doubly attractive, the explosions are easily the best on PS2. Expect great whoomping bursts of flame and light that fling scenery around like toys in an angry baby's pram. Doing one better than *GTA*, enough hi-ex'll take anything down – including enemy buildings. After one vicious pitched battle against South Korean troops, the smoke cleared and there wasn't a single building left standing. It was beautiful.

ACE OF SPADES

Not every problem can be dealt with via extreme prejudice, though. The Allied Nations won't take your word for it that one of the Deck Of 52 was in the building you've just reduced to rubble, so earning the big money requires a gentler touch. It's still possible to cap one of the head honchos from half a mile away with a sniper rifle, but you still need to get a photo of them to take home any cash. Better yet, taking them alive doubles your money – though it's obviously a much trickier prospect. Again, tactical options are limitless – even if you can afford a chopper, do

Shooting choppers down with a non-guided missile takes skill, but it's very satisfying.

Of course, you've got to be careful of flying debris when they take a dive.

You can never quite trust your mates in the gun-seat when they've got a bazooka.

ACES HIGH!

Every so often, you're clued in to the vague whereabouts of one of the Deck – then it's time to scour the area until your Intel lady gets a lock on their position, head in and (if possible) take them alive.

He might look like an accountant, but he still deserves a rifle butt in the face.

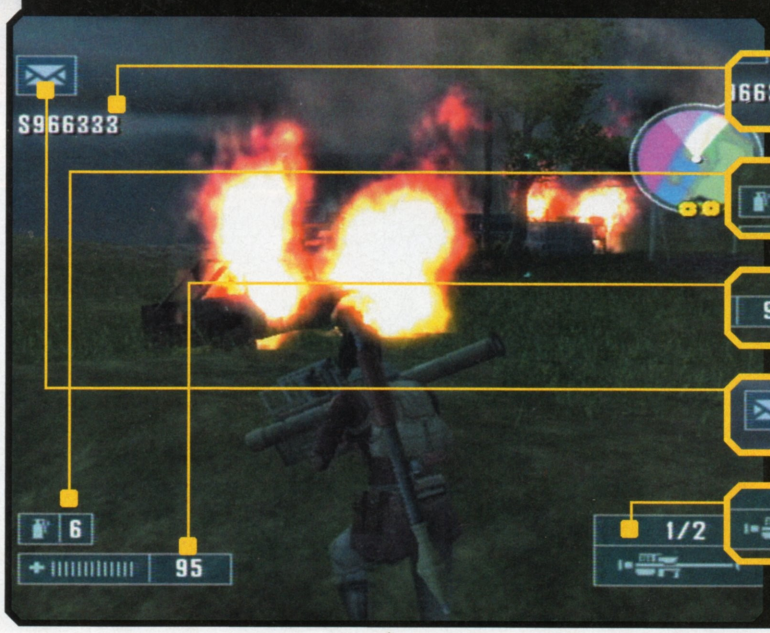
Find a flat area, drop your beacon and hoist him – can't shoot with a prisoner.

Then once the cavalry arrives, hoist him aboard your chopper.

"TOSS A FLASH GRENADE AND PISTOL-WHIP THE MAIN MAN"

LOCK 'N' LOAD

One of the toughest things about *Mercs* is that you're (fairly) restricted in how much kit you can carry. Air drops are an option, but they need a clear space and take a while to arrive, so it's better to plan ahead.



MO' MONEY

Money management is crucial so think carefully before you blow half a mill on a artillery barrage.

HEADS UP!

The default weapons kit contains two types of grenade – FRAG and FLASH.

MEDIC!

Once your health drops below 20, you get a red flush, then it slooooowly regenerates.

MY MATE?

These bars keep track of who your mates are – help out a unit, and they'll appreciate it.

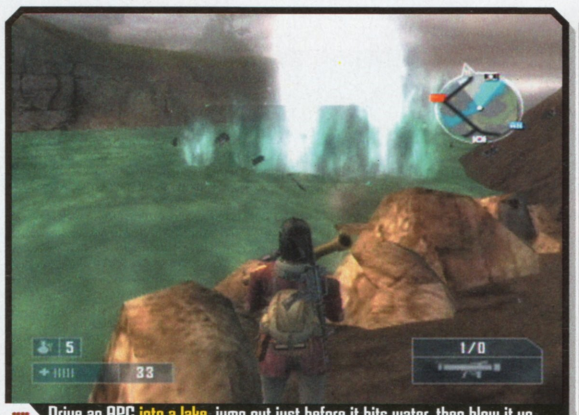
BIG GUNS

You get two guns – it's best to go for one automatic and one rocket-launcher.

PRETTY...

Mercenaries' impressive particle physics system merits a mention. Every explosion's accompanied by huge clouds of smoke that react realistically to whatever's happening.

Don't get too caught up in the visuals that you forget to run.



Drive an APC into a lake, jump out just before it hits water, then blow it up. Marvel as each chunk of vehicle creates its own 'fwoom' effect in the water!

The allied base is all very detailed, but it's a shame there isn't more interaction - there's a ping-pong table just begging to be played.

A HUMMER!

Your trusty suppliers aren't just for the mean and nasty things, like medipacks...

For a price, they'll airdrop kit like this brand new, bright red Hummer.

As driven by Arnie. They're murder on the environment, you know...

OFF-ROADIN'

Korea's an awfully big place – and without a sprint button, getting anywhere on foot's a chore. We need wheels, then.

Jeeps are easy to stop - but not all that useful.

Honk to load APCs with Allies - it's like having real friends!

Tanks are the business. Impervious to most small arms fire - but not very good at pulling off three point turns.

These mini-tanks are easier to steer than the big versions.

Trucks are only really useful for ramming fences over.

you want to risk mowing the Ace Of Clubs' entourage down with a chaingun? Maybe it'd better to go in quietly, toss a flash grenade, pistol-whip the main man and escape in the confusion? Or – sod it – why not go straight for the main man, then strafe down his bodyguards while he's safely on the deck with his hands cuffed behind his back?

There's very little you can't do – though kit and cash are limited early on, at least one mission offers the chance to nick a helicopter, making the next half-dozen assignments a breeze for the cunning player. Better yet, the game takes place over one map and only pauses to load individual missions, so it's best to use a choppers to see the sights.

Another crucial tactical consideration is that you're limited, *Halo*-style, to two guns and a handful of grenades. A sniper rifle and an anti-tank gun might be the perfect combination for a sabotage mission. But what are you going to do when a squad of North Koreans piles around the corner at point-blank range? Switching weapons and ordering in new kit on the run becomes second nature – although there's always a realistic tactical delay between phoning for that crucial medipack and it actually turning up.

MONEY TALKS

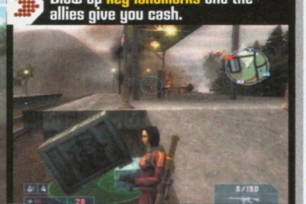
If there's a problem, it's that *Mercenaries* isn't quite as non-linear – or as clever – as it pretends to be. For instance, while it's fine to upset three of the game's factions, shooting up civilians or allied troops wallops you right in the pocket. There's also little sense of the really pissed-off factions going all-out to nail you. OK, so they'll have a pop if you drive through their territory, but after destroying an entire base, we'd expect a little bit more in the way of retaliation. Even after calling in a Bunker Buster on an entire South Korean base, a quick $100 grand slipped in the right palm kept us sweet with the people that count, and we earned almost that much selling the dead Koreans' tanks to the Mafia as well.

ALL 'BOUT THE BENJAMINS

Thankfully, not every mission involves shooting hundreds of innocent Koreans. It isn't quite as expansive as *GTA*, but there are plenty of easier bonuses to find.

This is the Chinese-occupied Pyongyang airport, where we're no longer welcome after an 'incident'.

Blow up key landmarks and the allies give you cash.



Weapons Of Mass Destruction are good for bonus money.

And there's the odd checkpoint, too. Shame about the shooting.

TANKS A LOT

The bigger vehicles might look imposing, but they're a cinch to nick compared to *GTA*'s brutes.

Once you're in, you control movement with the left stick and the turret with the right.

Pressing ◎ 'encourages' other soldiers to man the guns - just like in *Helly's Heroes*.

Best of all, nobody tries to steal them back! Although they do occasionally call in an airstrike on you.

BIG BANG

How to blow up a South Korean outpost in three easy stages.

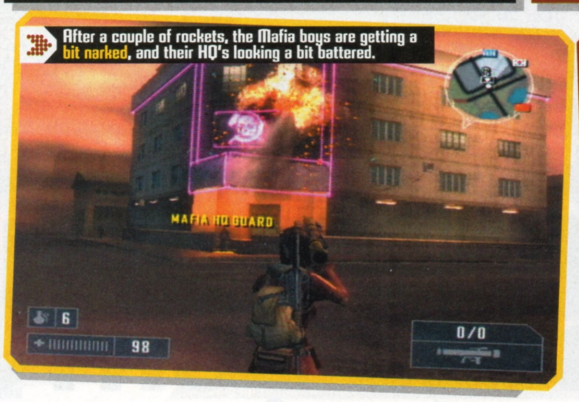
Step 1: Plant C4 under all the watchtowers, retreat, then detonate.

Step 2: Wreck all the radio towers with a handy portable bazooka.

Step 3: Get bored, order a Bunker Buster and blow up everything else in one go.

RUSSKIE BUSINESS

'If you can see it, you can blow it up'- claim Pandemic. Oh, yeah? What about the trees, and those little fences along cliff edges?



After a couple of rockets, the Mafia boys are getting a bit narked, and their HQ's looking a bit battered.

One more and... yes! The HQ crumbles to the floor. You can even clamber over the rubble! Good work.

TOO HOT TO HANDLE?

Pop quiz, hotshot – think you can handle it as a merc? Good at making decisions under pressure? Let's see how you get on with a typical mission...

Okay, so you have to blow up three fuel tanks and three trucks.

a) Bad luck - grenades don't work on fuel tanks.

b) Nope - trucks won't stay still for C-4.

c) Yep - it's the perfect combo! BABOSH!

FLYING HIGH

Early on, getting a chopper's all about luring it in low, then grabbing onto a landing strut and smacking the pilot. It's difficult, but worth the effort. You can nip between hotspots, steal vehicles with ease and – best of all – use the winch as an impromptu flail if you run out of ammo. Brilliant.

More bizarrely, it's even possible to hijack a jeep and keep the gunner, while the bewildered driver lies in the road. And though *Mercs* offers a decent spread of tactical options, some of our more inspired moments simply didn't work. Why isn't it possible to leave more than one wedge of C-4 around at once? Or save the game and keep the helicopter that we've gone to so much trouble to steal? *Mercenaries* is an excellent game – and it almost lives up to the hype. But it's not *Grand Theft Auto*.

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GM LOVES

- Blowing things up. Simple as that, really
- Riding around with a little gang of mates
- Being able to drive over fences instead of going around

GM HATES

- The fact that you can't plant explosives on vehicles. We've spent hours trying
- How stupid some of the enemies are - they're always open to bribery

GRAPHICS 86%

The best explosions on PS2 - and a detailed map. It's a bit grey, though.

GAMEPLAY 86%

Massively varied, and open to plenty of interpretation. It's a tactician's dream.

LIFESPAN 85%

Huge, with plenty of bonus and sub-missions to keep you busy.

OVERALL

90%

Not the all-conquering masterpiece we expected - but still an absolute riot.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: ..Conflict Desert Storm
WORSE THAN: .....GTA: San Andreas
WAIT FOR: .....Full Spectrum Warrior March (PS2)
BEST PRICE: .....£29.99, amazon.co.uk

"SHOOTING UP CIVILIANS OR ALLIED TROOPS WALLOPS YOU RIGHT IN THE POCKET"

GAMES MASTER GOLD AWARD

BEST BIT!

It's confirmed that the Ace Of Clubs is hiding in a bunker under Song tower.

Splash the cash, and order up a Bunker Buster - your one-stop shop for killing.

Hablammo! You won't be getting any more trouble from that bit of, um, charred dirt...

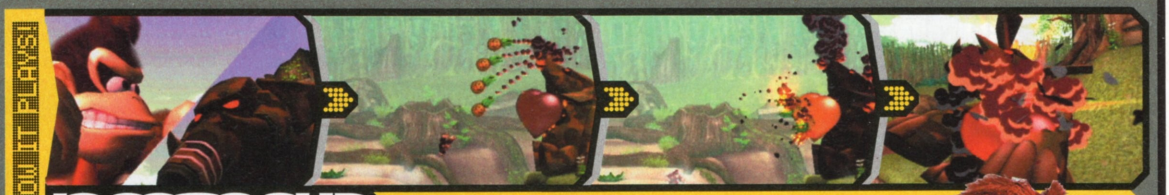
• OUT: NOW (JAPAN) • FORMAT REVIEWED: GC
• PRICE: £39.99 • PUBLISHER: NINTENDO • DEVELOPER: NINTENDO • ONLINE: NO
• SPECIAL: REQUIRES BONGOS • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 01932 895390 • PLAYERS: 1

MASHIN'

The second game to use Nintendo's bongo controller – and this one isn't about music. Insanity? Nope – just one of the best platformers this year...

- Thirteen levels
- Thirteen bosses

IN GAME CLIP:



Kong battles a stone elephant... by shoving exploding pineapples up its trunk!

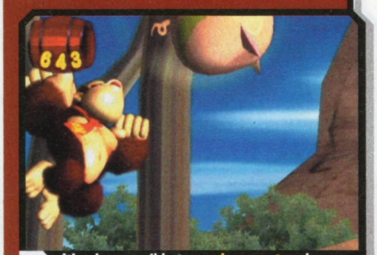
DONKEY KONG: JUNGLE BEAT

Has Ninty gone bananas?

HAPPY CLAP

A clap generates two circles – the outer one affects enemies, while the inner one drags in any bananas in its radius. Bananas from clapping count double, and it's simple once you actually play it...

Running through bananas is fine, but clap to collect them to double your score.



It's also possible to combo monsters by smacking them into each other.

At the end of each level, Kong tucks into an enormous fruit. No childish jokes, ta...

THE ART OF NOISE

All the world loves the sound of a bongo – and what better way to soothe your mum's nerves than with some gentle drumming?

Aaaagh! Look at Kong as he's accosted by animals! Clap! Clap like a seal!

Flap, birdy! Flap! We'll put a hole in these bongos if we have to...

After each level, pummelling the drums tops up your score. Pound those bongos!

Whunk. Clap. Whunk. Clap. Clap clap clap. Whunk whunk clap. WhunkawhunkawhunkawhunkawhunkaWHUNK.

The sound of one hand clapping? Nope. That's the noise of *Jungle Beat*, the loudest, craziest, most original game of the year. Your family, friends – and possibly, neighbours – are going to hate it. To be honest, they're probably going to hate you. And yes, controlling a 2D platform game with a set of plastic bongos does sounds child-eatingly crazy – but bear with us on this one.

The controls are simple. Rolling either bongo makes Kong sprint. Both drums jumps, hitting them again in mid-air bops. Clapping initiates an action, like grabbing an explosive pineapple or punching a fish.

Basic, yes – but the beauty is in the way these bog-standard platform actions combine to form other effects. In a typical combo, Kong might richochet off three walls (whunk), climb a flower (roll), swing from a vine (double-whunk), pilot a bird past some cannons (roll), grab some bananas (clap), stun a pig (clap) and then pound it in the face until it explodes into a shower of fruit (hammer the bongos like Keith Moon on crack). Once you're used to it, it feels more natural than using a joypad.

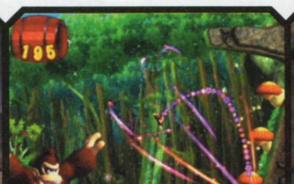
It helps, of course, that this is a classic Ninty game, without an ounce of flabby design or an enemy out of place. Every bee and jellyfish serves a purpose, and every level introduces something new. Soon, without noticing it, you're clearing entire areas with combos that'd shame Tony Hawk, clapping and thumping like a baby with a biscuit tin. Each level contains a couple of hundred bananas, but it's possible to score quadruple that number by collecting them in one acrobatic line. What's even more impressive is the variety of actions that clapping can trigger. For instance, when you're attacked by ninja monkeys, it activates a lightning strike that'll

TOP BANANA!

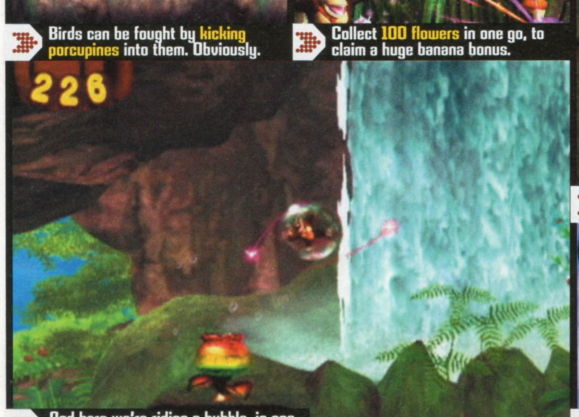
We know what you're thinking: 'Just how much variety can you have in a game that's only got four controls?' Absolutely loads, as *Jungle Beat* proves...

NEW SHOTS

Birds can be fought by kicking porcupines into them. Obviously.



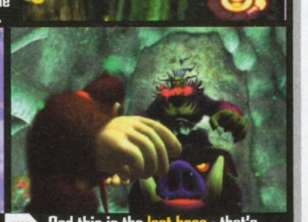
Collect 100 flowers in one go, to claim a huge banana bonus.



And here we're riding a bubble, in one of the game's more restful moments.

And here we're riding a bubble, in one of the game's more restful moments.

Here, we're swimming through a solid tower of jelly. Which is fun.



And this is the last boss - that's all we're giving away...

ICE ICE BABY

Every few levels, Kong gets to ride this...um...thing through the icy wastes for fast-paced banana collection.

It's all about timing the jumps right and clapping as you hurtle past those all-important bananas.

Then it's time to push a snowball along and stay ahead of a giant fish. Self-explanatory, really.

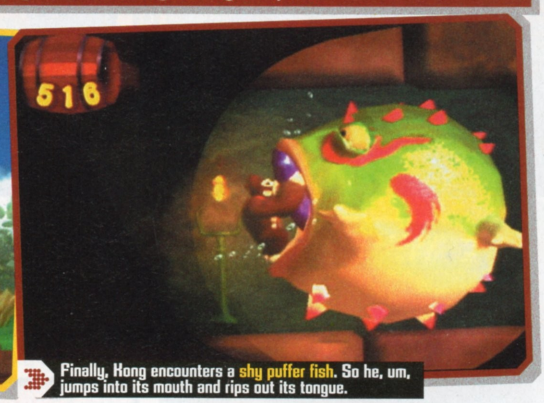
For the finale, there's a long-jump competition – metres mean bananas, so that take-off's crucial...

IT'S WAR!

Remember when Kong was a barrel-hurling, plumber-killing badass? Think he's changed? Big mistake, pal. Don't let the cuddly, huggable facade fool you – if you're a pig or a fish, Kong is out to ruin your day. No joke.

When you encounter this loveable furball, Kong leaps on its stomach and punches it until it explodes.

Later on, there's a comedy armadillo. Here we see Kong winding up to kick it into the stratosphere.



Finally, Kong encounters a shy puffer fish. So he, um, jumps into its mouth and rips out its tongue.

GO APE!

Despite the handicap of being controlled with a set of plastic drums, *Jungle Beat*'s boss battles are more inventive than most conventional platform games. Here's how a typical throwdown works out...

Step one: manoeuvre left and right by slapping the bongos.

Step two: time your clap correctly to deflect an electric melon.

If the clapping's getting on everyone's nerves, it's possibly to tap the side of the bongo and get the same effect. Not as much fun, though.

Step three: As the Warthog boss lies dazed, smash his face in by hammering the bongos until your hands are red and aching.

AWWW...

Best Enemy award goes to the tiny, angry ninja chimps. Cute, elusive and vicious, there's only one way to deal with them when you catch them. BOSH!

neutralise anything swinging a sword. At this point, it's possible to flick a pig into the air and scissor-kick it into them for extra combo points. Beautiful.

Where those plastic bongos really come into their own, though, is the boss battles. All of these follow basically the same structure – you need to avoid or counter the enemy's attacks until they're vulnerable, then pound them as hard as you can. There are only five types of boss, but shifting level design and beautiful design keeps the ultraviolence feeling fresh. This is where you're really going to upset anyone sitting near you – hammering those bongos really does feel like pounding on a giant warthog (or whatever), and you'll do it until your palms go numb. After several hours of heated play, we went to bed and woke up again with arms so stiff they could barely move. That's addictive gameplay.

Forget your plot-smothered stealth games and society-bothering gang war – *Jungle Beat* straddles the madness/genius divide like a giant ape, pounds its chest and shows you how games used to be. It's a reminder of why Nintendo are so great, and actually far superior to the fairly limited Donkey Konga bongo game. Only its relative shortness (done in four hours) stops us recommending it to anyone with a pair of hands. Next up: *Tekken* with a guitar...

GM

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

+ The gorgeous animation – check out Kong when he catches fire...
+ Clapping like a seal whenever the bananas start to fly

GM HATES

- When anyone else plays nearby – to be honest, it is pretty annoying
- How short it is
- When people put us off by clapping just behind our heads

GRAPHICS 96%

Beautiful and colourful – everything you'd expect from a Nintendo game.

GAMEPLAY 94%

Absolutely brilliant – intuitive, addictive and amazingly good fun.

LIFESPAN 70%

We completed it in four hours – but we'll be back for gold medals, oh yes.

OVERALL

88%

Small but perfectly formed, it's a fantastic return to form for Nintendo.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .....Megaman X8, 93%
WORSE THAN: .....Viewtiful Joe, 90%
WAIT FOR: .....Viewtiful Joe 2, TBC
BEST PRICE: .....£37.99, lik-sang.com

GIBBON GUIDE!

Tells you when to clap!

Other Contents

Only Nintendo are mad enough to release a platformer using bongos, but there are alternatives.

Try these:

XBOX Dancing Stage Megamix.....73%
PC Sega Superstars.....80%

"FLICK A PIG INTO THE AIR AND SCISSOR-KICK IT FOR EXTRA POINTS"

BEST BIT!

The showdown with your rival apes. First, you dodge their swipes with a clap...

Then, slug them in the jaw with a meaty thwok of left or right bongo.

While they're stunned, perform a furious double-handed drum solo on their face.

REVIEW

• OUT: 5TH FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: KONAMI
• PUBLISHER: KONAMI • ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 0825 37483274 • PLAYERS: 1-2

WHAT IS IT?

The filthiest game since *DOA: Beach Volleyball* – it's wrestling. With ladies. In mud.

- Eleven ladies with two personalities and at least five costumes each.
- Story and Title Match modes.

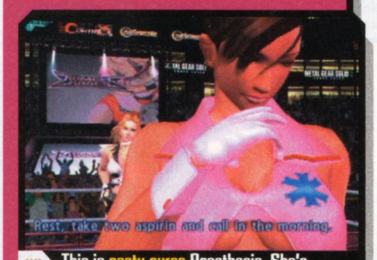
The girls like dunking each other's heads under the mud.

RUMBLE ROSES

Surely that should be 'grumble'? No?

SHE'S BAD!

Completing the story mode with any of them unlocks their alternate, darker persona – so you can complete the entire game again.



This is nasty nurse Anasthesia. She's building a robot that feeds on insecurities.

This is Dr. Cutter. She's probably wrestling to wipe out bunny rabbits, or something.

And this is, erm, her in a bikini. Lovely, eh? She's still totally evil, though.

Gallery mode lets you concentrate on the ladies without all that fighting rubbish

SQUEAL!

There are actually three types of finishing moves in *Rumble Roses* – Killer, Lethal and Humiliation, the latter being the most entertaining. As the match goes on, certain moves 'embarrass' one or both of the wrestlers. Sometimes it's the person doing the move, depending on how much it shows off their pants. Once they're squirmingly upset, it's time to go in for the kill...

Look! She's all red! Regretting wearing that outfit now, eh love?

And.. erm... we're a bit lost for words. Let's hope she taps out quick, eh?

A question philosophers have pondered for years: 'Is it wrong to fancy characters in computer games?' After all, is it really any different from fancying someone with fake breasts? Well, yes – but is it any different from fancying the Little Mermaid, or that sexy rabbit from the Cadbury's Caramel adverts? What's that? You don't? Oh.

Well, anyway – if you don't find the idea of watching digital ladies in skimpy outfits wrestling each other saucy, there's no point in playing *Rumble Roses*. The wrestling's good, but each match is just a struggle to line up the first Lethal or Humiliation move. It's full of silly mistakes – like the fact that Irish-whipping a character into the guardrail doesn't affect them. Worst of all, there are no tag-team or survival matches – just one-on-ones.

If you just want to watch virtually naked virtual ladies squealing their way around a ring, though, you're in luck. The moves fit into two categories: spectacular or smutty, with the second lot contributing to the game's unique 'humiliation' bar. *Roses* is all about evil (spandex-clad) nurses and brave (bikini-wearing) Judo girls. If that floats your boat, the hands-free options and gallery modes are sure to impress. Just don't ever criticise us for admitting that we quite fancy Pocahontas.

GM

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GM LOVES

- Doing the high-flying moves - some of this stuff'd make Rey Mysterio think twice
- The Mad Mud matches - why can't Colin McRae get dirt physics this good?

GM HATES

- The objectification of women. Well, a bit
- How slow it feels compared to Smackdown!
- Being forced to play through for new kit

GRAPHICS 80%
Some of the shiniest, best animated characters we've ever seen.

GAMEPLAY 30%
A dumbed-down version of Smackdown, with no versatility.

LIFESPAN 50%
You can play through every character's story mode, but they're short.

OVERALL

52%

If you're thinking of buying this, it's not because it's a good game. Which is handy.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

NOT AS GOOD AS: ...Backyard Wrestling, 70%
WORSE THAN: ...WWE Crush Hour, 35%
BEST PRICE: ....£32.99, gameplay.co.uk

Similar Formats

Also on:

It isn't out on anything else, but DOA: Ultimate should keep smut-loving Xbox owners happy.

Or try these:

CUBE Day Of Reckoning 79%
XBOX DOA: Beach Volleyball 46%

"IF YOU WANT TO WATCH VIRTUALLY NAKED LADIES IN A RING, YOU'RE IN LUCK"

BEST BIT!

Sensibly, the boss lady wears more clothes than everyone else.

Until she turns into a giant robot, anyway. This never happens to The Rock...

The gloop-physics in the Mad Mud matches really are a little bit special.

• OUT: FEBRUARY • FORMAT: GBA • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: AMAZE • PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
• ONLINE: NO • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, GC, PC • CALL: 01753 756100 • PLAYERS: 1

LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS

It's on the GBA now... unfortunate?

The game's full of puzzles, such as skipping stones and hitting switches.

SWAP SHOP

Each of the three characters have different strengths – you can switch between them, too.

CITRUS SHOT

Collect ammo for your makeshift weapons as you go, then spark out enemies such as spiders.

Lemony Snicket **didn't impress us too much on the big consoles last month (*GM*155, 58%). But on Ninty's handheld it's a slightly different game, predictably with more emphasis on side-scrolling platforming and less on elaborate puzzles.**

As with the other versions, you can switch between the three Baudelaire children, Violet, Klaus and Sunny, each having their own strengths and weaknesses. Sunny the baby can crawl through small gaps, while Klaus is a mean shot with weapons such as the Apple Chucker, but petrified of heights. The great wuss.

Combining both the book and the Jim Carrey film the game is based on, the plot is unravelled between levels using film stills and text. For fans, there's also a ton of extra film stuff to unlock by collecting butterflies and the like. It all looks pretty slick.

Klaus is good with an Apple Chucker but too scared of heights to climb a ladder.

HIDE AND SEEK

You progress from one area of the evil uncle's mansion to the next, collecting items for Violet to use to build new inventions and solving puzzles. But the problem here is the lack of an objective screen – it's easy to forget what the hell you're supposed to be collecting and so you get stuck jumping around randomly. You're also sometimes unfairly killed by enemies – spiders come out of nowhere, for example, or bats attack you. This is especially frustrating seeing as you have no way of killing them.

That aside, the game works better on the GBA than it did on the other formats. This is mainly because it's faster-paced, with platform jumping proving more exciting than traipsing around a dusty old mansion. This almost makes up for the fact much of the gameplay is repetetive as hell.

Playing hide and seek with a series of tat isn't the most fun you'll have on your GBA, but young fans should be entertained. GM

JUDGEMENT — KATH

GRAPHICS 70%
Nice film stills in the cutscenes and atmospheric locations in the game.

GAMEPLAY 30%
Basic platforming is made more fun by multiple playable characters.

LIFESPAN 42%
Swings from generally simple to quite tough, but it isn't a long game.

OVERALL

67%

A decent game, but the Baudelaire children aren't the most thrilling kids you'll ever play as.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: Barbie: The Princess and the Pauper, 60%
WORSE THAN: ..... Kirby and the Amazing Mirror, 78%
BEST PRICE: .....£24.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £24.99 • DEVELOPER: THQ • PUBLISHER: THQ • ONLINE: NO
• SPECIAL: USB CAMERA • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 01483 767656 • PLAYERS: 1-8

SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS

MOVIN' WITH FRIENDS

Drop on the deck and flop like a fish!

Ah, the allure of slapping jellyfish. Only try in real life if you've got a bucket of urine.

Being covered in bees. Signalling for help from a burning yacht. Getting off your face on Tizer at an all-night rave. What have all the above got in common? Easy – they're all better reasons for waving your arms around than playing *Spongebob Squarepants: Moving with Friends*.

Let's get one thing straight: this isn't a game designed for Eyetoy - it's a load of tedious sub-games linked together by the fact that you wobble your fingers over buttons to play them.

Take bowling – the ball launches itself in any direction, and it's your job to direct it towards the pins by stroking the right and left arrows. It's like using semaphore to pick your letters in Scrabble – it sort of works, but why bother?

The closest thing you'll get to an actual game is the hang gliding section, and even that's put to shame by the *Nights* section in *Sega Superstars*. The structure doesn't work properly, either – you're restricted to about 30 seconds per stage, and the action's never that frantic. *Movin' With Friends*? Make them play this, and your friends will be movin' in the opposite direction. GM

JUDGEMENT — JOEL

GRAPHICS 70%
Plenty of nice pictures of Spongebob and animation clips.

GAMEPLAY 30%
Very basic games, but you wave your arms about to play them.

LIFESPAN 15%
Thirteen games, at an average of ten minutes each. About two hours, then.

OVERALL

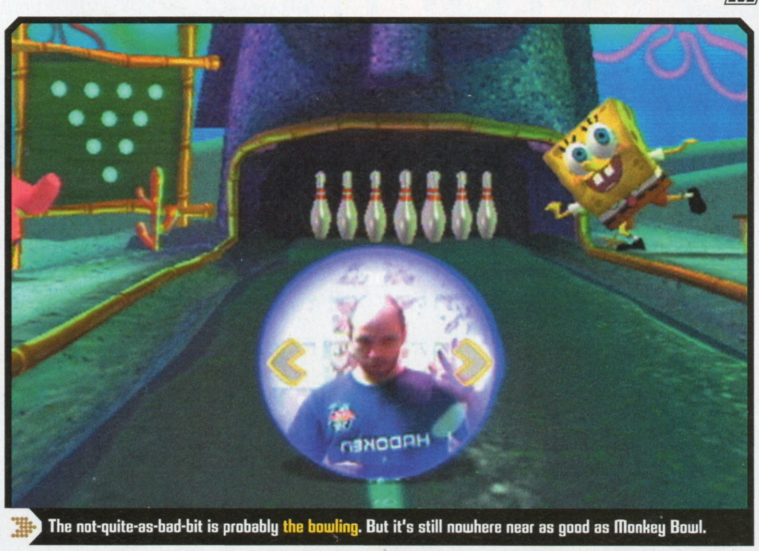
26%

A disgrace to the name of Squarepants. If you get this, take it back immediately.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: .....Nothing
WORSE THAN: ....Sega Superstars, 80%
WAIT FOR: .....Eyetoy Kinetic, TBC
BEST PRICE: .....£19.99, gameplay.co.uk

STRIKE A POSE

Doing well enough gives you the chance to vogue like a chump - this time, with Spongebob's friends. Hurrah!



The not-quite-as-bad-bit is probably the bowling. But it's still nowhere near as good as Monkey Bowl.

OUT: 18TH FEBRUARY • **FORMAT:** PC • **PRICE:** £29.99 PLUS £8.99 PER MONTH • **DEVELOPER:** BLIZZARD
PUBLISHER: VIVENDI • **ONLINE:** MULTI-PLAYER • **OTHER FORMATS:** NONE
WEB: WWW.WORLDOFWAR.COM • **PLAYERS:** THOUSANDS

PCCD

WHAT IS IT?

Fantasy online RPG set in the world made famous by the strategy games – and it's made by Blizzard.

- Massive, detailed world
- Two sides to choose from
- Endless things to do

HOW IT PLAYS!

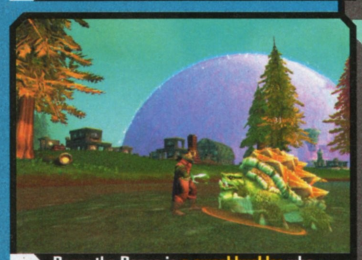
TRIBES 'N' QUESTS Carry out quests, collect ingredients, group with other players or just explore – there's never a dull moment.

TAKING SIDES

Are you a goodie or a baddie? Tree-hugging elf or elf-stomping orc? Pick a character – no-one expects an orc to be nice, though.

Rossonwhy, the brave dwarf Paladin, upholds all that is good and true.

Rossferatu spends his nights feasting on the flesh of the fallen, and collects stamps.



Roger the Rogue is a swashbuckler who travels far and wide to avoid danger.

WORLD OF WARCRAFT

There's a whole world out there to explore...

What's the matter? Scared, are you? Well, it's time to be brave and dip your toe into an online world – a world where you're not the only important one. Massively multi-player online RPGs have finally grown up, so there's never been a better time to try.

World of Warcraft perfects all the basics: create a character, enter a beautifully detailed fantasy world along with hundreds of other real people, take on quests and develop your character. To be honest, there's not a lot of innovation, but would you rather play a game with loads of ideas that didn't work? Exactly.

Warrior, warlock, rogue, priest – there's the usual choice of classes, and a few trade skills thrown in for good measure, but the most important choice you make is whether you fight for the Alliance or the Horde; the goodies or the baddies. There's a cast of humans, gnomes, dwarves and elves against orcs, undead, trolls and tauren to choose from. As you become more powerful, you'll come into contact with enemy players, and if you play on a 'player-versus-player' server you'll have the chance to fight them – sometimes in massive groups of co-operating players.

The star of the show has to be the world itself. There's an unbelievable amount of variety to be discovered, from dusty deserts to lush grassland and spooky forests. The cartoon-like presentation ties everything together nicely – you'll never look at something and think it looks stupid. Play it for too long, though, and you'll start to wonder why real people look so weird. There's never been a better time to let the real world take a back seat. GM

FEATURING! Goblin hordes!

Other Formats

The closest alternatives on your format:

CUBE	Phantasy Star Online	80%
XBOX	Everquest Online Adventures	79%
XBOX	Final Fantasy 11 (import only)	82%

To begin with, you'll be fine completing simple quests and killing wildlife.

Later on, group up with other players to stand a chance in dangerous dungeons.

"PLAY FOR TOO LONG AND YOU'LL WONDER WHY REAL PEOPLE LOOK SO WEIRD"

BEST BIT!

The simple pleasure of exploring a new place (and killing everything you find).

JUDGEMENT

ROSS

GM LOVES

- WOW's vibrant world of colour and life.
- Spanking enemy players on PVP servers.
- The sheer quality. WOW has been designed and playtested to perfection.

GM HATES

- Packed servers – too many people can spoil the party.
- Waiting three months between the US and UK release.

GRAPHICS 90%
Gorgeous visual design. Technically decent but will run on most PCs.

GAMEPLAY 90%
Little we haven't seen before, but it's never been pulled off so well.

LIFESPAN 92%
Loads to do, and you won't get bored. Think months rather than weeks.

OVERALL

93%

The best game of its type, and easy for newcomers too. Dive into World of Warcraft.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

- BETTER THAN: ..... Everquest 2
- WORSE THAN: ..... Eve Online
- WAIT FOR: ..... Vanguard, 2006
- BEST PRICE: ..... £24.99, play.com

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- OPM2

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- OXM

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- CVG

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• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: XB • PRICE: £39.99 • DEVELOPER: CLIMAX • PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: PC, GBA • CONTACT: 01932 838230 • PLAYERS: 1-16

XBOX | PC CD | GAME BOY ADVANCE

THE LIST

Belated FPS semi-sequel to the classic 1982 Disney film. Minus Jeff Bridges.

- Xbox Live multi-player combat
- 15 weapon types
- Authentic light cycle racing

IN GAME CLIP: Fix the enemy in your sights, take aim and send that SOB to silicone heaven with your Prisbee 'o Pury.

TRON 2.0 KILLER APP

Trust us – this one'll kill ya...

At first glance, *Tron 2.0: Killer App* appears to have taken First Person Shooters and turned them on their head. This, after all, is a computer game set inside a computer, assisted by the *Tron* licence and some stellar Hollywood voice talent.

We bet you won't have played anything for ages that looks so uniquely cool, with the entire game world bathed in a gorgeous neon glow. Individuality is a big part of *Tron*'s appeal. After all, this is a world where weapons are called primitives, and humans are either godlike 'users' or viruses like Jet waiting to be exterminated. You even level up using 'build points'. As we said, cooler than cool.

Tron 2.0 also draws upon its famous predecessor's light cycle races, with your main man Jet transforming into cycle mode and facing off against rival bikers. This mini-game of sorts really comes into its own during the impressive multi-player component, although in the single-player mode it's often a chore rather than a laugh.

THE 2.0 TRONNIES

Frustratingly, *Tron 2.0: Killer App* strives for greatness, only to be kicked in the crown jewels, thanks to some glaring oversights. Level design is bland, with an unholy amount of jumping puzzles – not much fun when the loading times are sluggish. Seeing as a near identical PC version of *Tron* was released over a year ago, the game just feels horribly dated compared to *Doom 3* or *Halo 2*.

Boss fights are also sadly thin on the ground. There's a memorable Mano a Mano disc-only confrontation with the kernel, one of the uber guardians of *Tron 2.0*'s mainframe. Flying around the arena dodging attacks and planting a lip-smackingly satisfying shot of your own is what this game should have been all about. Unfortunately, these magic moments are all too rare, relegating this brave effort, like the Sinclair C5, to the ranks of old stuff best left unrevived. GM

Other Formats

Also on:

PC Almost identical. Looks better, but multi-player not as developed. Released over a year ago.

GBA The handheld version of the same license is a similarly mixed bag.....68%

LIGHT CYCLES

These in-game races can be a little on the tricky side at first. Here's *GM*'s four-step guide to becoming the Michael Schumacher of the Tron universe.

Zoom over the green zones to gain speed and overtake opponents.

Pick up power ups whenever you get the chance – especially this wall extender.

Start the slaughter! *Tron 2.0* calls this de-rezzing.

Take your place in the winners enclosure and surround yourself with swimwear models!

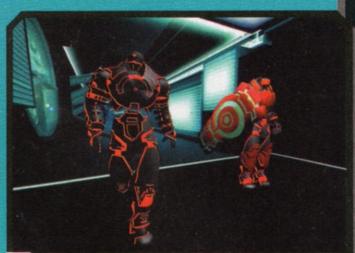
"YOU WON'T HAVE PLAYED ANYTHING FOR AGES THAT LOOKS SO UNIQUELY COOL"

BEST BIT!

Internet City. More neon than a chav with a tuned-up Vauxhall Corsa.

THE KERNEL

Mentionable for two things: 1. His top pun of a name: kernel, colonel – geddit? 2. The legendary showdown Jet has with him near the climax of the game.



This nasty fella wants nothing more than to stamp all over your megabits.

So we dealt with him as all baddies should be dealt with - nipple clamps.

JUDGEMENT

ROB

GM LOVES

+ The fact that there's more neon than NFS Underground 2
+ The online light cycle races!
+ The disc weapon! It's TRON, baby!

GM HATES

- Makes your eyes hurt after a bit
- Beneath the gloss it's pretty banal FPS fare
- Loading times are a bitch

GRAPHICS 36%

Technically dated compared to – say – Halo 2, but so stylised it still looks brill.

GAMEPLAY 31%

Unoriginal and frankly boring level design given the rich source material.

LIFESPAN 58%

Single-player is little more than a slog, and multi-player is little better.

OVERALL

61%

Unique feel means that this could have shined, but shooting would be too good for the level designers.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .Goldeneye: Rogue Agent 60%
WORSE THAN: .....Halo 2, 95%
WAIT FOR: ..Project Snowblind, February
BEST PRICE: .....£29.99, amazon.co.uk

IN THE ARENA ANYTHING GOES

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CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON: Swords, axes or severed body parts. Then battle your way through ancient Rome, going head to head with centurions, gladiators, elephants and wild tigers. Take part in classic chariot races and infiltrate regal palaces with deadly stealth attacks. Your mission: to restore justice to the corrupt Roman Empire.

18

CAPCOM

shadowofrome.co.uk

REVIEW

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM • ONLINE: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 0207 490 1323 • PLAYERS: 1

It's got to be when you have a go in the robot suit, purely because it's less frustrating than the rest of the game.

BEST BIT!

MEGAMAN X8

There's nothing Mega about him...

Calling yourself *Megaman*, you're always opening yourself up to criticism. It's a lot like Muhammed Ali calling himself the Greatest Of All Time, or the week one *GM* reviewer spent calling himself the Unstoppable Handstand King – sooner or later, you'll have to back it up, and then there's going to be trouble.

The problem for *Megaman* is – he's rubbish. Without upgrades, he can only shoot horizontally, and he doesn't even have a double jump. To put that into perspective, if you can move your arm at a 45 degree angle, you're twice as mega as *Megaman*, and *Viewtiful Joe* – PS2's real 2D hero – is approximately six million times more mega than you. *Megaman*'s friends – Axl and X – are better off, but we still wouldn't bet on them if they went up against *Ty The Tasmanian Tiger*.

You might think this would make *Megaman* difficult, but don't worry. Most enemies have a weakness – such as the Spider boss's inability to do anything at all if X stands in the corner and slashes repeatedly.

Case in point: this is simplicity itself with Axl, and nearly impossible with X.

What we're trying to say is that *Megaman*'s past it. He was great before running in more than two dimensions was invented, but *Ratchet 'n' Clank* can do everything he can, *and* turn enemies into sheep. Even if you want a straight 2D shooter, the little Metal Slug bloke would shoot him to death. He's had it.

Now, please don't get us started on *Superman*...

You're probably a bit outclassed there, X. Best run away, eh?

When driving, you can steer left and right. It's like *Jak and Daxter* never happened.

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GRAPHICS 15%
They look a bit 3D, but mostly move in 2D – and still are poorly animated.

GAMEPLAY 20%
As Indiana Jones once said, "It belongs in a museum."

LIFESPAN 30%
It's plenty tough, but that's thanks to the punishing lack of continue points.

OVERALL

43%

Dated like milk in a student's fridge – Megaman really needs to get his act together.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .....Megaman Battle Chip Challenge, 34%,
WORSE THAN: .....Viewtiful Joe, 90%
WAIT FOR: .....Viewtiful Joe 2, out now
BEST PRICE: .....£24.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GBA • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: ATARI • PUBLISHER: ATARI • LINK-UP: NO
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 020 8222 9700 • PLAYERS: 1

Like the top down viewed battling sequences, the RPG sections aren't great.

You can chat to other characters, although the story starts to drag quite early on.

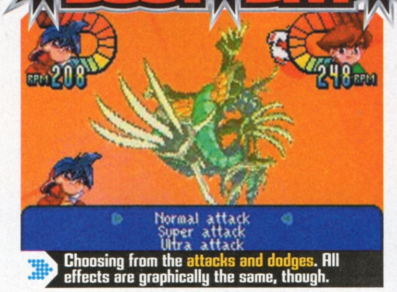
BEYBLADE GREVOLUTION

A new *Beyblade* – start of a revolution?

For the uninitiated, the world of *Beyblade* is a bewildering one. Its RPG/battling style of gameplay is similar to *Pokémon*, but unlike *Pokémon*'s friendly interface, *Beyblade* is initially complex and frustrating, featuring uninteresting spinning battle tops. A lack of basic tutorial, and few 'handy' hints about how to battle (when you haven't even figured out how to launch yet) is enough to drive away the keenest beginner.

And even if you enjoyed previous *Beyblade* games, there's still very little to recommend *GRevolution*. The tactics of the characters you battle alter very little.

BEST BIT!



Choosing from the attacks and dodges. All effects are graphically the same, though.

You can construct new Beyblades, trade them and buy them from stores, but none have a big impact on battles. And it's not explained exactly how one Beyblade's meant to be better than another. Trudging around *Beyblade*'s world is pretty dull too, and the graphics are nowhere near as nice as the *Zeldas* and *Pokémons* on the GBA.

Not so much a revolution, more another shoddy *Beyblade* game. A game about spinning tops being crap – who would have thought it?

LET IT RIP

Win a Beyblade battle by reducing an opponent's RPM to zero; either knock them out of the arena or damage their top until it breaks.

Wonder around towns to find Beyblade components hidden in objects.

You can challenge different opponents to battles in order to build up your skills.

In the arena, it's a case of banging into your opponent and defending yourself.

JUDGEMENT

KATH

GRAPHICS 30%
Overall it's nothing special. The special attacks effects are all identical.

GAMEPLAY 20%
Mostly consists of trudging around, followed by unexciting battles.

LIFESPAN 30%
There's plenty to do if you can stick at it, but you'll fall into a coma first.

OVERALL

24%

GRevolution is just the biggest disaster you could ever not want to take for a spin.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .....Beyblade (PS), 8%
WORSE THAN: .....Pokémon Ruby and Sapphire, 85%
WAIT FOR: .....Boktai 2, summer
BEST PRICE: .....£24.89, simplygames.com

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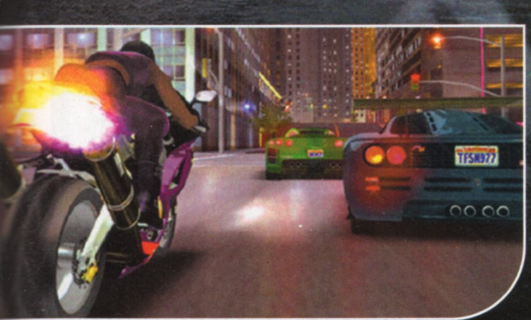

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• OUT: 18TH FEBRUARY • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £39.99
• DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM • ONLINE: NO
• SPECIAL: SURROUND SOUND • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • WEB: WWW.SHADOWOFROME.COM • PLAYERS: 1

PS2 PlayStation 2

18

DETAILS

An action-rich third person adventure set in Ancient Rome, covered in more guts than a mad doctor's scrubs.

- Two difficulty settings
- 192 combos to discover

HOW IT PLAYS!

IN GAME CLIP: Just imagine if *Fight Club* was renamed *Fight To The Death Club*. There you go.

SHADOW OF ROME

Veni, Vidi, Vici, Bloodi, Thumpi, Ouchi...

SMASH 'N' GRAB

There's no point being all masterful with weaponry if you're useless with your bare hands. When Agrippa's unarmed, he doesn't curl into a sobbing ball of panic. He just takes a hands-on approach...

Barge into someone and jostle them for their weapon. The crowd will be impressed.

You could just punch everyone to death, although it might take days.

Nip behind a groggy opponent, and throw him about like an unhappy ragdoll.

AIR TO THE THROWN

Despite being world champions at murdering and having orgies, the Romans never got around to inventing guns. So how on earth do they take down people who aren't stood right next to them?

The bow is a useful weapon. Try loosing off eight shots in a row to see what happens.

Octavianus can throw jugs at guards to knock them out. Underarm, obviously.

Sneak up on someone, then throw your weapon at them for a one-hit takedown.

Silence is golden, so most people say. But not Capcom, oh no. The Japanese developer has always been a right goer for gore, making a living out of the dead – *Resident Evil* has had us all skidding around on zombie guts for some ten years. And now Capcom has taken things further with *Shadow Of Rome*, a game where violence is golden.

This new title is bloodier than a lung milkshake. Set in the glory-era of the Roman Empire, it follows two characters who work together to unravel an assassination conspiracy.

CARPE DIE-ING

The first is Agrippa, a centurion with shoulders like skyscrapers. His brilliant sections give the game its shockingly violent edge, as he pounds and disembowels his way through gladiator tournaments, wielding fistfuls of vicious combos in a bid to please the bloodthirsty crowds. The fighting system is one of the most entertaining and flexible that Capcom have put into a 3D adventure yet, offering many ways to hack exit wounds through hordes.

The second character is weedy light-footed fop Octavianus, whose sections rely on stealth and spying. These are nowhere near as much fun as Agrippa's gut-spilling sessions. As a stealth 'em up, the stages work fine and feature some neat ideas – such as being able to hide something behind your back as you walk. But they feel dull and flat next to Agrippa's fighting fest. Octavianus can be killed with just one hit which is very frustrating, making these sections only good for plumping out the storyline. If *SOR*'s violence is golden, then its silence is wooden.

FURIOUS CAESER

Agrippa's sections aren't without their problems, too. Some of the encounters – such as having to beat up tigers – feel

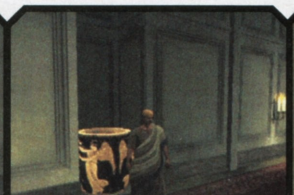
Other Formats
The nearest thing on your module

CUBE	Eternal Darkness	89%
XBOX PC	Obscure	74%
PC	Rome: Total War	93%
XBOX	Genma Onimusha	91%

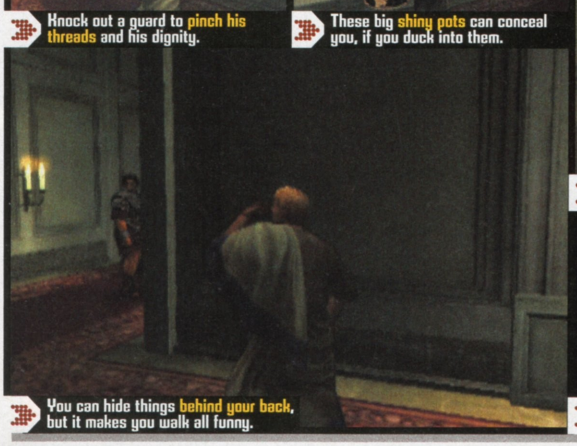
MGS: STEALTH BEATER?

Octavianus' stealth sections may be far from brilliant, but there's a fistful of interesting ideas bubbling away in there, just waiting to be done some fancier, funkier justice.

Knock out a guard to pinch his threads and his dignity.

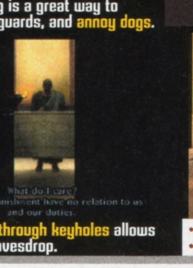


These big shiny pots can conceal you, if you duck into them.



You can hide things behind your back, but it makes you walk all funny.

Whistling is a great way to distract guards, and annoy dogs.

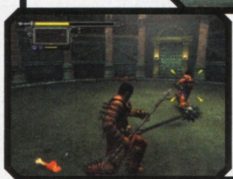


Peeping through keyholes allows you to eavesdrop.

Search for coins - they allow you to buy new furniture. No, really.

TOOL BELTER

Short swords are your basic weapons. Team one up with a shield, or just throw it at someone's brain.



The spear is a long-range stunner, doubling as a javelin for those hard-to-reach archers.

The giant halberd is so powerful it's hilarious. Wield it, and carve up a slave-salad.

Snap, crackle, pop – a fully-charged mace blow is an outright killer. Horrible. Which is why the crowd loves it.

COMBO SELECTA

Agrippa's moves are so effective he can splat his opponents apart in dozens of ways. The more gruesome the attack, the more likely you are to uncover a 'Salvo', meaning special attack.

The 'Cruelty To Animals' Salvo is self-explanatory, if seemingly the wrong way round in this shot.

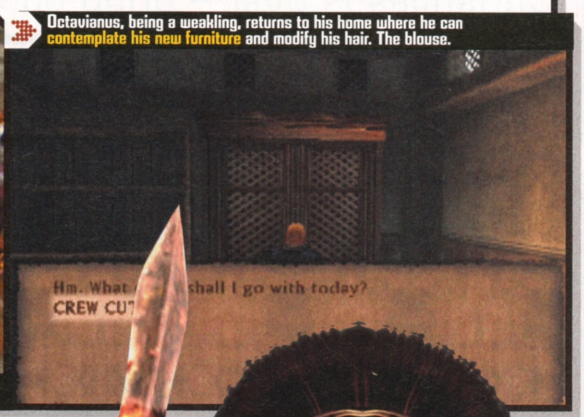
Laid out on your back like a crippled turtle? Fling some sand around to blind everyone.

Grab a scimitar, and hack off two or more limbs in one swipe. Congratulations, Dr Meat Sculptor.

LET OFF STEAM

It's not just all stab, stab, sneak, sneak, stab, stab y'know. There are more diversions in *Shadow Of Rome* than first meets the eye, with both Agrippa and Octanavius finding ways to occupy themselves in between bouts of action.

Agrippa, being a real man, spends his leisure hours battering other like-minded brutes within the dusty, noisy confines of a chariot race.



Octavianus, being a weakling, returns to his home where he can contemplate his new furniture and modify his hair. The blouse.

CHEERS!

By executing a tight series of flashy moves, you can build up your Salvos bar, driving the excitable crowd mental.

Perform an 'appeal', and the throngs will reward you with extra weapons and food.

less spectacular than the standard gladiatorial battles, as you haven't access to the sheer number you do when battling grunts and other gladiators. Also, *SOR* can be very tricky at times. Collecting the gold cups in the battle arenas is as difficult as trying to kick the wheels off a moving car.

So, is *SOR* worth £XL – sorry, £40? It's very nearly an essential game. It takes adventure games into perversely violent and brilliantly thrilling territory, with more blood than a butcher's plughole - without it feeling shocking for the sake of a sale. But the experience is dampened by average stealth sections, which feel flat-chested next to the generously proportioned battle scenes. We can't wait to see where Capcom goes with the inevitable sequel, though. It could easily be amazing. GM

GET AGRIPPA! The centurion hero

JUDGEMENT

GM LOVES

+ Agrippa's fights, where he pummels enemies. With a mace
+ The chunky difficulty level and wealth of replay value to savour
+ Its uninhibited treatment of violence

GM HATES

- The lacking stealth sections
- Having to use hit 'n' run tactics instead of combo's in boss fights
- The one-hit kills of Octanavius' stages

GRAPHICS 82%

Some impressive environments and hazy camera effects during skirmishes.

GAMEPLAY 86%

Plenty of epic and battles, dragged down by underwhelming stealthy bits.

LIFESPAN 85%

Typical Capcom longevity. The game's extra modes will last for weeks.

OVERALL

85%

A bloody and very nearly bloody fantastic Roman romp with too much of a split personality.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .....Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance, 35%
WORSE THAN: .....Onimusha 3, 82%
WAIT FOR: .....God of War, summer
BEST PRICE: .....£29.99, amazon.co.uk

"IT TAKES ADVENTURE GAMES INTO PERVERSELY VIOLENT AND THRILLING TERRITORY"

BEST BIT!

Play to the crowd well and they'll throw you a Magnus sword.

It's one of the best weapons in the game. Chop chop!

Light as a kitten and sharp as a scalpel, be sure to keep it.

REVIEW

• OUT: NOW (US) SPRING (UK) • FORMAT: GBA • PRICE: $29.99 • DEVELOPER: KONAMI
• PUBLISHER: KONAMI • SPECIAL: SOLAR SENSOR, GBA LINK CABLE, WIRELESS
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 020 8987 5730 • PLAYERS: 1-4

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WHAT IS IT?

Hideo Kojima's solar panel-based sequel to *Boktai*. You play as a vampire hunter, using real life sunlight to charge your weapons and defeat the vamps.

- More than 60 solar powered weapons
- A whole new multi-player game and trading options

IN GAME CLIP — Find actual rays of real sun to charge up your solar power and take on the vampires. Bright torches won't work.

BOKTAI 2: SOLAR BOY DJANGO

Christmas is over – bring on the sun...

RUN FOR SUN

At the start of *Boktai 2*, Django's gun del sol is snatched away by a vampire. It's not long before he's given a magical gauntlet, though.

Choose from over 60 weapons – you can combine them and create new ones.

There's a series of dungeons in the game – many rooms contain puzzles to solve.

Some puzzles can only be solved at certain times of day (or night).

Hideo Kojima's sunlight-based *Boktai* was one of the battier games we played last year. A game that requires the person playing it to take it outside and give its solar panel a good sunning every few hours? That's just weirdness.

But it was weirdness that worked surprisingly well, mainly because the sunlight aspect isn't just a gimmick. Playing as the vampire hunting Django, the solar powering-up makes perfect sense. The sunlight kills boss vampires – once you've dragged them out of their dark dungeon in a coffin, zapping them with rays finishes them off. You also use sunlight to charge up your weapons and make them more powerful.

Unfortunately for shade worshippers (and albinos), sunlight is a necessity to progress in the game. Which is one reason for not importing and waiting for the spring/summer UK release. You can store up your sunlight, but eventually you need a good solar charge. *Boktai 2* also has a real-time clock to distinguish night from day. Certain enemies are only active in one or the other – it's all very interactive. Whether this is your thing or not, everyone will enjoy the core gameplay. A combination of RPG and action, *Boktai* even incorporates some *Metal Gear*-style stealth. Puzzles are more frequent than in the first game, and it also has a multi-player mode, where up to four can fight for points to be spent in the main game.

Like your mum and her Jackie Collins novel, it's a perfect game for a summer holiday. But when there's no sunshine, it's miserable.

GM

VAMPIRE SLAYER

In order to slay a vampire boss, you have to contain him in a coffin and drag him kicking and screaming out of his dungeon and into the outside game world. Power up the solar pile driver with real life sunlight, and Mr Vamp is soon dust.

The pile driver works by zapping a vampire with sunlight and killing him.

When you're indoors in a dungeon, you can't top up your sun meter.

JUDGEMENT

KATH

GM LOVES

+ It's bigger and more puzzle-intensive than the first game
+ The solar panel and real-time clock add an interactive feel and are perfectly suited to handheld play

GM HATES

- When the sun's not shining outside, you're screwed
- You can't always just pick it up and play it whenever you fancy
- The isometric view doesn't always work

"SUNLIGHT KILLS VAMPIRES – ONCE YOU'VE DRAGGED THEM OUT OF THEIR DUNGEONS"

Other Formats

Or try these:

CUBE Zelda: The Wind Waker 97%
PC XB: Fable 91%

GRAPHICS 86%
Lovely looking, and the time of day affects the conditions in the game.

GAMEPLAY 90%
Slaying vampires in the sun makes for varied and action-packed gameplay.

LIFESPAN 92%
Bigger than the first game, with more puzzles and the need to level up.

OVERALL

88%

Deduct 60 points if you live in an igloo, but if not, Boktai 2 is better than the original.

BEST BIT!

The sun's shining, you've got solar power stored, and there's a vampire to slay.

Django can push himself flat against a wall to pass obstacles or creep around enemies.

Dodge enemies using stealth, better still, fight them to get stronger.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: Boktai: The Sun is in your Hand, 86%
WORSE THAN: ..... Zelda: A Link to the Past, 95%
WAIT FOR: The Legend of Zelda: Tetra's Trackers, TBC
BEST PRICE: $29.99
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FA Premier League Man.'00
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Final Fantasy 6
Galerians
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Gran Turismo 2
H.Potter & Philosopher's St.
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Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY ADVANCE

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Backyard Baseball
Beyblade: Ult. Blader Jam
Boktai
Breath of Fire
Crash Bandicoot Fusion
Crash Nitro Kart
Dragon Ball Z: Buu's Fury
Dragonball Z: L. of Goku 2
Golden Sun
H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
H.Potter & Pris. of Azkaban
Incredibles
Leg. of Zelda: Link to Past
Pinball of the Dead
Pokemon Fire Red
Pokemon Leaf Green
Pokemon Ruby
Pokemon Sapphire
Scooby Doo: Cyber Chase
Sonic Advance
Sonic Advance 2
Sonic Advance 3
Sonic Battle
Spyro: Season of Ice
Star Wars: Att. of Clones
Street Fighter Alpha 3
Super Mario Pinball*
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
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Yu-Gi-Oh!: Destiny Board T.
Yu-Gi-Oh!: R. of Destruction
Plus Many More...

GAMEBOY COLOR

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Fairy Tale, Shrek
H.Potter & Philosopher's St.
Links Awakening (Zelda)
Mario Land 2
Pokemon Blue
Pokemon Crystal
Pokemon Gold
Pokemon Pinball
Pokemon Red
Pokemon Silver
Pokemon Yellow
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Dark Duel Story
Zelda: Links Awakening DX
007 James Bond
102 Dalmatians
Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

Ace Golf
Animal Crossing
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
BloodRayne
Call of Duty: Finest Hour*
Combat Zones, Top Gun
Eternal Darkness
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent
H.Potter & Pris. of Azkaban
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Kirby's Air Ride
Metroid Prime 2: Echoes
Need for Speed: Under. 2
Paper Mario: 1000 Yr Door
Pokemon Colosseum
Rainbow Six 3
Res. Evil: Code Veronica X
Resident Evil
Resident Evil Zero
Second Sight
Sonic Mega Collection
Star Wars: Rebel Strike
Super Mario Sunshine
Tales of Symphonia
Terminator 3: Redemption
The L.of Zelda: Majora's M.
The L.of Zelda: Mast. Quest
The L.of Zelda: Wind Waker
The Sims
Viewtiful Joe
WWE Day of Reckoning
X-Men Legends
Yu-Gi-Oh! Falsebound King
Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Empires
Broken Sword
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Champ. Manager '00/'01
Championship Manager 4
Com. & Conq.: Red Alert 2
Com. & Conq.: Tiberian Sun
Commandos 2
Commandos B. Enemy Lines
Discworld Noir
Doom III
Empire Earth
Enter the Matrix
Escape from Monkey Island
Evil Genius
Far Cry
Grand Theft Auto
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: London
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Half Life 2
Halo
Hitman 3: Contracts
Homeworld 2
LMA Pro. Manager 2005
Mall Tycoon
Manhunt
Matrix, Enter the
Men of Valor: Vietnam War
Need for Speed: Undergr. 2
Rollercoaster Tycoon
Rome: Total War
Sim City 3000
Sim City 4
Sims 2
Sims: Makin' Magic
Splinter Cell
Starsky & Hutch
Theme Hospital
Tomb Raider 5: Chronicles
Total Club Manager 2004
Plus Many More...

X-BOX

Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Burnout 3: Takedown
Call of Duty: Finest Hour
Championship Manager '02
Chase: Hollywood Stunt Dr.
Club Football 2005
Colin McRae Rally 3
Conflict: Vietnam
Crash
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller
Crimson Sea
Dead to Rights
Def Jam: Fight for New York
Deus Ex: Invisible War
Dino Crisis 3
DRIV3R
Dungeon & Dragons:Heroes
Fable
FIFA Football 2005
Fight Night 2004
Freedom Fighters
Ghost Recon 2
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
Halo
Halo 2
Headhunter: Redemption
Hunter: The Reckoning
James Bond: Agent Under F.
James Bond: E. or Nothing
Jedi Knight: Jedi Academy
Juiced
Knight of the Temple
Legends of Wrestling 3
Leisure Suit Larry: M.C.L.
LMA Manager 2003
LMA Manager 2004
LMA Manager 2005
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Max Payne 2
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Men of Valor: Vietnam War
Midtown Madness 3
Moto GP
Munch's Oddysee
Need for Speed: Under. 2
Ninja Gaiden
Otogi: Myth of Demons
Outlaw Golf
Outlaw Volleyball
OutRun 2
Pro Evolution Soccer 4
Rainbow Six 3
Rainbow Six 3 - Black Arrow
Rocky Legends
Second Sight
Secret W. Over Normandy
Shellshock Nam '67
Silent Hill 4: The Room
Sims: Bustin' Out
Soul Calibur 2
Spider-Man: The Movie 2
Star Wars: Battlefront
Star Wars: Knights Old Rep.
Sudeki
Suffering
Terminator 3: Redemption
The Fellowship of the Ring
The Hobbit
Thief: Deadly Shadows
Tiger Woods Golf 2005
TOCA Race Driver 2
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's Underground 2
XIII (Thirteen)
Plus Many More...

PLAYSTATION2

A = 0 1
Age of Empires 2
Aliens vs Predator:Extinction
America's 10 Most Wanted
Arc the Lad:Twilight of Spirit
Army Men: Sarge's War
Atlantis 3: New World
B = 0 2
Bad Boys 2
Bard's Tale
Battlestar Galactica
Big Mutha Truckers
Black Monday (Getaway 2)
Blade 2
BloodRayne
BloodRayne 2
Bounty Hunter, Star Wars
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
Burnout 3: Takedown
C = 0 3
Call of Duty: Finest Hour
Conflict: Desert Storm
Conflict: Vietnam
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
Crash Twinsanity
D = 0 4
Def Jam: Fight for New York
Devil May Cry
Digimon Rumble Arena 2
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3
DRIV3R
Dynasty Warriors 2
E = 0 5
Ecco the Dolphin
Escape from Monkey Island
Evil Dead: Fist. of Boomstick
F = 0 6
FIFA 2004
FIFA Football 2005
Fight Night 2004
Final Fantasy X
Final Fantasy X-2
Formula 1 2004
Freestyle Metal X
G = 0 7
G1 Jockey
Getaway
Getaway 2: Black Monday
Ghost Hunter
Ghost Master
Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
Giants: Citizen Kabuto
Gladiator: S. of Vengeance
Goldeneye: Rogue Agent
Gran Turismo 3
Gran Turismo 4 Pro.Edition
Gran Turismo Concept
Grand Theft Auto 3
GTA: San Andreas
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Gumball 3000
H = 0 8
H.Potter & Chamber of Sec.
H.Potter & Philosopher's St.
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hulk
I = 0 9
Incredibles
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
Italian Job: L.A. Heist
J = 1 0
Jak 2: Renegade
Jak 3
Judge Dredd:Dredd v Death
Jurassic Park: Op. Genesis
K = 1 1
Kill.switch
Killzone
Kingdom Hearts
Knight Rider
L = 1 2
Leisure Suit Larry: M.C.L.
LMA Manager 2003
LMA Manager 2004
LMA Manager 2005
M = 1 3
Mafia
Manhunt
Max Payne
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Midnight Club 2
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
Mortal Kombat: Deception
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Naval Ops:Warship Gunner
NBA Live 2005
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Need for Speed: Under. 2
O = 1 5
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege
P = 1 6
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Pro Evolution Soccer 3
Pro Evolution Soccer 4
R = 1 8
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T = 2 0
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REVIEW

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PS2 • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: CAPCOM • PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
• ONLINE: MULTI-PLAYER • OTHER FORMATS: XB • CALL: 020 7490 1323 • PLAYERS: 1-2

As you'd expect, the bloody enormous dinosaur isn't all that manouevrable...

CAPCOM FIGHTING JAM

But what's happened to Dhalsim?

Jam, n.1. A crush of congestion of people or things. 2. An awkward situation. Obviously, somebody at Capcom's been using the wrong dictionary, because *Capcom Fighting Jam*'s a lot more like the second definition than the first.

For a start, it's got 20 characters. Four each from *Street Fighter 2*, *Street Fighter Alpha*, *Street Fighter 3*, PSone vampire-'em-up *Darkstalkers* and obscure dinosaur bash *Red Earth*. No Sagat or Cammy, let alone *Marvel Vs Capcom* faves Jill Valentine or Bulleta. Each 'set' have their own style – *Darkstalkers* are good at combos for example – but there's no way to switch between them. There's none of *Marvel Vs Capcom*'s lightning-speed tagging, and only one super-move per character. It's a disappointment.

Most shockingly of all, every character looks exactly the same as they did in whichever game they appeared in last. Final boss Pyron looks like something we once doodled in the back of a maths book and then sneezed on. You'd think Capcom could've at least cleaned them up a bit. With Sammy and SNK dominating the 2D beat-em-up field at the moment, it feels like Capcom have squeezed the nostalgia cow once too often. With the planned 56 characters, this would've been a collector's item – as it is, it's for hyper-spods only. What went wrong, Capcom? It's no use blaming your dictionary...

ISN'T SHE CUTE

The only genuinely new character in the game is a sinister child called Ingrid.

HE'S ON FIRE!

Pyron looks like a reject from *Power Rangers*, or the Human Torch with a sombrero. He was originally the boss in *Darkstalkers*, the game that about only three of your British friends have played and nobody liked. Akuma would kick his head in in three seconds.

BEST BIT!

Dragon-punching a dinosaur in the face; smacking him is certainly a laugh.

And then there's this ninja bloke. Why were they in a game together? We've got no idea.

JUDGEMENT

JOEL

GRAPHICS 32%
Most of these graphics are nearly ten years old - and it shows.

GAMEPLAY 70%
It's Street Fighter but MVC has moved the 2D genre beyond this.

LIFESPAN 50%
If Jools Holland threw a 'jam' this weak, only David Sneddon would turn up.

OVERALL

51%

Possibly the weakest Capcom compilation ever. Get Marvel Vs Capcom 2 instead.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN: .....Fight Club, 25%
WORSE THAN: ....King of Fighters, 65%
WAIT FOR: .....Tekken 5, May
BEST PRICE: .....£24.99, amazon.co.uk

• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GBA • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: SNK • PUBLISHER: IGNITION
• LINK-UP: NO • OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 01925 9319703 • PLAYERS: 1

METAL SLUG ADVANCE

One thing this shooter is not is sluggish...

SNK opus has finally come to GBA, and in what style! Straight away, *Metal Slug Advance*'s sumptuously drawn 2D visuals will cause many an eye to bulge. They're so fine you'd almost think you were playing on Neo Geo! The series' unique 'copters, tanks, grunts and bosses are all present and correct, looking cuter than ever on the GBA's ickle screen.

MSA is as simple as ABC to pick up and play. The bullet-tastic gameplay consists of simply picking Walter or Tyra and braving five daredevil missions. Shoot, dodge, collect power-up, rinse and repeat. This is gaming in its purest form, and we love it. *Metal Slug* has always been hard, but this version is arguably the easiest of all time thanks to a save facility, infinite continues and a little health bar. All but the best gamers will still find it a huge challenge, though.

The big problem with *MSA* is that once you get the hang of the ultra-tough gameplay, you'll breeze through the five short missions in an hour flat. SNK have seen this coming, and included cards that unlock special bonuses to collect during missions, although this won't entertain you for long. But, suspect longevity notwithstanding, this piece of gaming magic has captured our hearts all over again.

Constant streams of soldiers emerge for Tyra to main and kill. A woman's work...

WHO'S BOSS?

Metal Slug is renowned for some of the most monstrous bosses in videogames, and this version doesn't let the side down.

BEST BIT!

For those unfamiliar with the series, *Metal Slug* actually refers to these wicked little tanks you get the chance to pilot every once in a while. Tally ho!

JUDGEMENT

ROB

GRAPHICS 91%
One of the best-looking titles available on the system.

GAMEPLAY 94%
Tried and tested shooting heaven. Simple, and yet infuriatingly tricky.

LIFESPAN 38%
There's no real reason to go back to it unless you're into collecting stuff.

OVERALL

81%

It looks, sounds and plays a million bucks, but if you're on a tight budget think twice.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?
BETTER THAN:.....Megaman Zero Mission 3, 65%
WORSE THAN: .....Metroid Fusion, 92%
BEST PRICE: .....£24.99, amazon.co.uk

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1096	Del Boy	1071	The Bear (Bo)
2381	Borat (Ali G Show)	2392	Trigger Happy
2379	Bert and Ernie	2393	Yoda
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*Impersonators Only
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Samsung: C100, E100, E700, E710, P400, V200, X100, X60
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1722	Jo Jo *Leave*	6603	Anastacia *Left Outside Alone*
7775	The Streets *Dry Your Eyes*	5872	Scooter *The Logical Song*
9469	Natasha Bedingfield *These..*	7165	50 Cent *In Da Club*
9596	Usher *Burn*	3981	Eminem *Just Lose It*
4435	Usher *Yeah*	7687	Avril Lavigne *My Happy Ending*
2954	Robbie Williams *Radio*	3394	Khia *My Neck, My Back*
5533	Maroon 5 *This Love*	0397	Michael Jackson *Billie Jean*
2302	Girls Aloud *Love Machine*	8587	P.I.M.P. *50 Cent*
6663	Eamon *Don't Want You Back*	9119	Britney Spears *Toxic*
1627	Nelly *My Place*	2726	Usher *Confessions Part II*
1178	Maroon 5 *She Will Be Loved*	2956	Danzel *Pump It Up*
8400	Ultrabeat *Pretty Green Eyes*	4253	McFly *Obviously*
6718	D12 *My Band*	9603	O Zone *Dragostea Din Tei*
8098	XTM *Fly on the Wings of Love*	3300	Britney Spears *My Prerogative*
9109	D-12 *How Come*	2317	Green Day *American Idiot*
9006	DJ Casper *Cha Cha Slide*	2977	The Streets *Blinded By The Light*
8809	Busted *Thunderbirds Are Go*	3979	Usher and Alicia Keys *My Boo*

CHART HITS AND PRE RELEASE

4617	2 Play *Careless Whisper*	5816	Jamie Scott *Searching*★
2253	Band Aid 20 *Do They Know..Xmas*	3984	Kanye West *Workout Plan*
2058	Green Day *Boulevard of Broken..*★	3755	Kelis & Andre 3000 *Millionaire*
3755	Kelis and Andre 3000 *Millionaire*	4001	Kylie *I Believe In You*
2125	Bo Selecta *I Got U Babe*	3144	Lil Jon *What You Gon Do*
3981	Eminem *Just Lose It*	5808	Lucie Silvas *Breathe In*★
4620	Snoop Dogg *Drop It Like It's Hot*	9563	Mario Winans *I Don't Wanna..*
6789	Britney Spears *Everytime*	2039	Maroon 5 *Sunday Morning*
3137	Britney Spears *Megamix*	4041	Marques Houston *Because Of You*
5201	Busted *She Wants to Be Me*	4021	McFly *Room on the Third Floor*
4364	Cassidy Ft R Kelly *Hotel*	4619	Mousse T *Right About Now*
3139	Cheeky Girls *Girls & Boys*	5208	Nadia *A Little Bit Action*
6454	Christina Aguilera *Dirrty*	4724	Natasha Bedingfield *Unwritten*
3140	Ciara *Goodies*	3131	Nelly *Na NaNa Na*★
3327	D-12 *Git Up*	4022	Nelly & Christina *Tilt Ya Head Back*
3634	Dana Rayne *Object of My Desire*	6379	Outkast *Hey Ya*
5381	Destiny's Child *Lose my Breath*	5209	Outkast *Ghetto Musick*
2301	Dizzee Rascal *Stand Up Tall*	3147	Paul Holt *50 Grand for Xmas*★
3978	Dizzee Rascal *Dream*	9408	Peter Andre *Mysterious Girl*
5811	Dizzee Rascal *Graffin*★	5226	Pop *Serious*
6481	Eminem *Lose Yourself*	5809	Rachel McFarlane *Lover*
3636	Eminem *MOSH*★	2656	Rachel Stevens *More More More*
4443	Frankee *F*U*R*B*	4725	Robbie Williams *Misunderstood*
5806	Freefaller *Do This Do That*★	5401	Ice Cube *You Can Do It*★
4603	Girls Aloud *I'll Stand By You*	3653	The Killers *Somebody Told Me*
4033	Gwen Stefani *What You Waiting..*	5217	The Streets *Could Well Be In*
3641	Hot Pantz *Give You One 4 Xmas*	3135	Westlife *Smile*★
8711	Jamelia *Superstar*	4728	Westlife *Fly Me to the Moon*

Tv & Film Themes

0819	Tv & Film *Matrix*	9601	Angel City *Touch Me*
0029	Tv & Film *Beverly Hills Cop*	2974	Armand Van Helden *My My My*
5150	Tv & Film *Phoenix Nights*	1962	Darren Hayes *Popular*
8559	Tv & Film *Kill Bill*	3393	Deep Dish *Flashdance*
8561	Tv & Film *Lord Of The Rings*	1243	Dj Otzi *Hey Baby*
1486	Tv & Film *Knight Rider*	7874	Dj Sammy *Heaven*
8488	Tv & Film *Starksy and Hutch*	1965	Eric Prydz *Call on Me*
0076	Tv & Film *The Muppets*	O621	Faithless *I Want More*
0091	Tv & Film *The Simpsons*	3925	Michael Gray *The Weekend*
9476	Tv & Film *Alias*	9255	Nina Sky *Move Ya Body*
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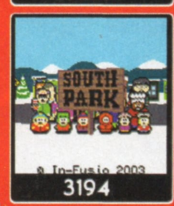

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- Two playable characters
- 36 bonus stages
- 8 levels

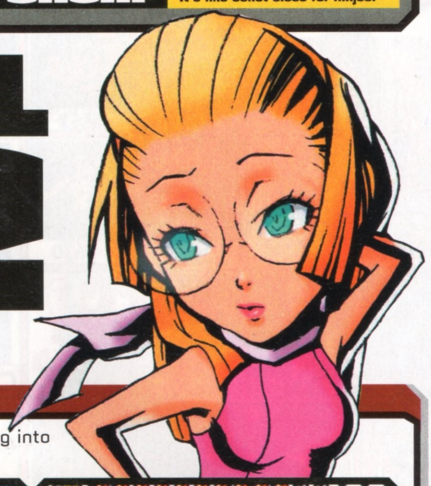
HOW IT PLAYS!

SLOW! FAST! KICK! ZOOM IN! PUNCH!

It's like ballet class for ninjas.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

Or, around the world in 80 replays...



SPEED LIMIT

Joe (and now Sylvia's) Slow function is the most used in the game, making the action (including you) move at a snail's pace. The benefits of such slothy movement? Blink and you may just miss them.

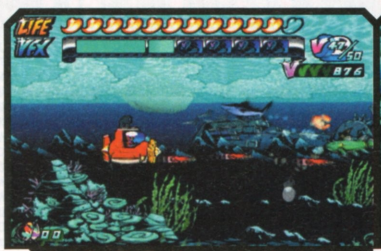
Slow's main use is to dodge enemy attacks, in order to leave them in a daze.

Enemy bullets become visible and a well-timed punch will even send them flying.

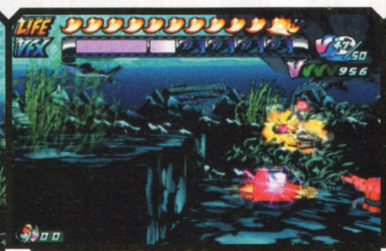
Ninjas attack so swiftly that you don't see their swipes. Not in slow mode, though.

LIKE A SIX MACHINE

As with the original, Joe gets to take a break from all that fistfighting by jumping into the Six Machine. It's like the Batmobile, except happier.



Joe's first Six Machine sees it taking the form of a bomb-firing submersible.



You can still flick to Sylvia at any point in the battle, and back again.

Sylvia's Six Machine is a little different: it's a drill tank that releases depth charges.

Odds are, you already know Joe. His GameCube debut last year gave gamers a refreshing, minty uppercut to the brain, with its bugged-out cartoon style, cunning use of time control powers and its amazing reinvention of the 2D scrolling beat 'em up. Microsoft's soggy moggy *Blinx* was made to look like Betamax next to Joe's slick DVD-style package of special features and rocket-powered looks.

Odds are, too, that you're not ready for a sequel, what with the original being so damn tricky to conquer. *Viewtiful Joe* was hard – girders, samurais and bulldogs hard - and it caused many to have facial spasms as they tripped arse-over-thumb over the fiendishly nasty difficulty curve.

JOE'S BLOWS

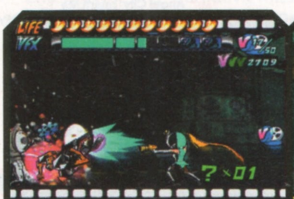
So here's the first change this sequel brings: it's more accessible. You'll still have to make expert use of Joe's VFX powers – the ability to slow down time, speed it up, and zoom in on the action – to progress, but those thorny boss encounters are less of a sticking point.

And there's a new skill in the game; Joe's flirty girlfriend Sylvia (a new character) has the power to record. The record power allows you to 'tape' an action, and then repeat it another twice straight after, meaning you get to dish out triple damage. Be warned, though – use this replay function while you're taking damage, and you'll suffer three times the hurt.

Otherwise, it's a familiar blend of crazy combat and inventive environment-based puzzling. The more you play, the craftier

GIRL'S ON TOP

Joe's bespectacled missus is a bit of a slapper, to be honest, from the tips of her tickly pom-poms to the bottoms of her kiss-me-quick boots. She fancies us, we reckon. We'd return the sentiment, if not for her freakishly large head.



Sylvia fires glowing heart-shaped bullets. Violent AND romantic.

When she runs out of VFX, her gun parps out a boxing glove.

Surrounded by vicious robots? Target a bunch of them a let rip with funky bullets.

Spinning? Doing the splits? In a mini-skirt? Where's the nearest wedding chapel?

Leave the girl alone for a while and she pulls a saucy pose.

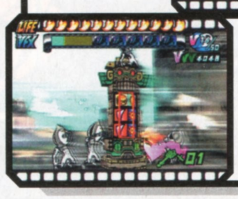
If Sylvia catches fire, bring Joe in to douse the flames.

MACH ATTACK

Joe's exclusive Mach Speed skill causes the game to go all swirly, while he moves at double speed.

With this in effect, your punches and kicks come out so quickly that they'll set you on fire...

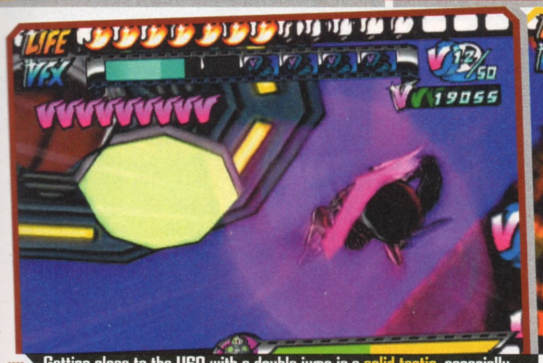
...not to worry, though, as Joe can just Mach Dash to put out any of those suit-ruining flames.



Platforms powered by fans will soar twice as high with the Mach Speed function in place. Fly, my pretty, fly...

JET SETTER

Viewtiful Joe 2 is rammed with sub-bosses, the most common being the variety of jets and helicopters that rain down streaks of bullets while hovering at extreme top of the screen. There's even a UFO. So how the hell do you bring it down?



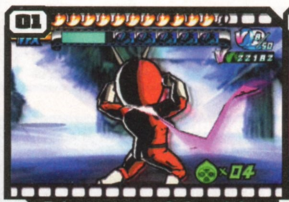
Getting close to the UFO with a double jump is a solid tactic, especially if you zoom in and use a replay kick to hit it hard in the cockpit.

Every now and again, the UFO will let rip with some filthy napalm missiles. Slow them down, and return to sender...

The most effective technique, is to stun the enemies mooching about on the ground, and uppercut them into the saucer's weak underside.

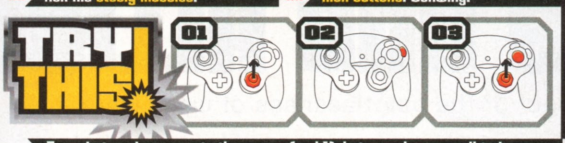
ZOOM TYCOON

Flicking up on the C Stick will take the camera in even closer to Joe/Sylvia, giving you a spectacular – but limited - view of the action. But there's good reason, as it opens up a range of smashing new moves for mulching up bad guys.

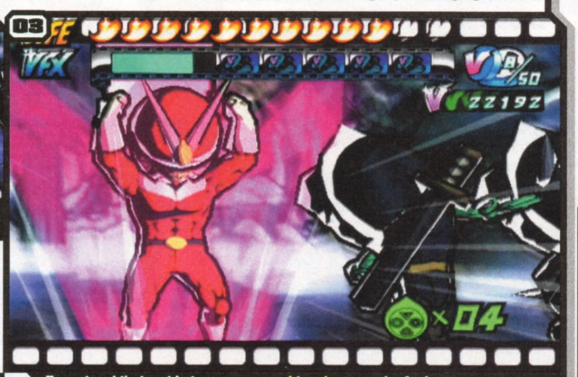


To begin: zoom in. And watch Joe flex his steely muscles.

Slow down time, and then hit the kick buttons. Schwing!



Zoom in to gain access to the moves (pad 1), but use slow as well to jazz up your performance (pad 2). Try it in mid-air (pad 3) for added devastation.



Zoom in while in mid-air to come crashing down on the fools below you, like some drunken god.

DODGE BALL

Dodge an attack while in slow motion, and these red reticules appear. Now hit the enemy for some generous point multipliers.

you become at using Joe and Sylvia's powers – such as moving so quickly that your kicks turn fiery as they heat up the air around you. Multiple VFX powers can be used at once, allowing you to concoct all manner of time-sensitive attack schemes.

VIEW 2 A KILL

Despite the game feeling like it's been built out of the same nuts and bolts as the original, there's still a feeling of freshness to it all. The puzzles come at you in tasty, bite-sized pieces, and the game manages to inject plenty of new wacky personality into its kooky, movie-themed levels. Robotic enemies dressed as slutty nurses, wielding giant syringes? Yes, please. A mine cart chase involving a psychotic T-rex? Oh, go on then.

And for the masochists among you, there's the bonus section, known as 36 Chambers. It's like a special dungeon for people who enjoy spanking themselves with video games, involving a series of ultra-hardcore challenges that'll test your VFX skills to their limit. They may not be for everyone, but do extend the game's life so much that it'll probably be receiving a telegram from the Queen.

So, there you have it. No revolution, just evolution: a fatter second helping for the fans, and a more refined starter for the newbies. Capcom has been known to run some of its game series into the ground. We dare it to try it on with Joe, only because it seems like it will be such tough work to grind this little bugger down.

GM

"ROBOTIC ENEMIES DRESSED AS SLUTTY NURSES WIELDING SYRINGES? YES PLEASE"

Other Formats

Also on:

PS2 We've not had chance to test this version, but the PS2 conversion of the original stood up well.

Or try these:

XBOX PC Prince Of Persia 2 ..... 89%
XBOX Street Fighter 2 Anniversary 60%

BEST BIT!

The Sexy Pose. It's one of a number of bonus powers you can buy at the shop, with your stash of V-points.

The Sexy Pose is activated by zooming in the very moment you dodge an attack in slow mo.

It does a little damage to every enemy on screen, blinding everyone with Joe's muscles.

JUDGEMENT

STEVE

GM LOVES

- The explosive fight-fest of colour and personality
- Smaller, neater VFX puzzles
- Not getting an ulcer from boss scraps

GM HATES

- That it's not that much of an improvement, really
- The unconfirmed PAL release date
- Lack of two-player mode

GRAPHICS 82%
Crackles with stylish detail and life. Not a leap above the original, though.

GAMEPLAY 86%
More honed and less wrinkled, but nothing has changed that significantly.

LIFESPAN 82%
A substantial game to finish just the once, and a tricky challenge to master.

OVERALL

88%

Another belter of an outing for the pint-sized time lord. It's not revolutionary, but it's not trying to be.

SHOULD YOU BUY IT?

BETTER THAN: .....Prince Of Persia, 88%
WORSE THAN: ..Prince Of Persia 2, 89%
WAIT FOR: .....Forgotten Realms: Deomn Stone, 11th February (PC, XB)

REVIEWS ROUND UP

GAME BOY ADVANCE
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GBA
• PRICE: £19.99 • DEVELOPER: KROME
• PUBLISHER: EA • OTHER FORMATS: NONE
• CALL: 01932 450 000 • PLAYERS: 1

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER 2- BUSH RESCUE

Tie me Tasmanian Tiger down, sport. Actually, don't...

Strewth, cobber! It's a version of *Ty 2* that doesn't make us want to beat ourselves round the billabong with a didgeridoo! Yep, the GBA version's a lot more welcome for two reasons. Firstly, because rather than being a half-hearted action adventure, this version plays to the GBA's strengths and reinvents itself as a not-bad platformer. The story stays the same and it retains many features of the original like the Battle Bunyip, but it all works a lot better in 2D. And secondly, it leaves out all the Aussie voice-overs, and tells its story in ear-friendly text. Bonzer!

See? Games really are better in 2D! At least this one is.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 78%

For a *Ty* game it's rather brilliant. And it's quite good by normal standards too.

REVIEWER: JIM McCULEY

PC CD
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £34.99
• DEVELOPER: FIRAXIS • PUBLISHER: ATARI
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE • CALL: 020 8222 9700 • PLAYERS: 1

SID MEIER'S PIRATES

Yo ho ho and a bottle of Sauvignon Blanc, please...

Make your minds up, games-producing people. First of all you tell us that piracy's bad, and now you come along with this splendid game condoning a life of piracy. No, don't bore us with talk about different kinds of piracy; we don't want to know. We're too busy playing *Pirates*, frankly. It's a long-overdue update to the classic swashbuckling sim and it has everything for the budding buccaneer. Pitched sea battles, sword fighting and a lot more make for a packed game with something for almost everyone. Just the thing for reliving those *Pirates of the Caribbean* fantasies.

That frigate looks crap, but it's faster with more crew and lotsa guns. Yikes!

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 88%

Eyepatch-wearing fun ahoy! This is the only kind of piracy we condone.

N-GAGE
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: N-GAGE • PRICE: £39.99 • DEV: NOKIA
• PUBLISHER: NOKIA • OTHER FORMATS: NONE
• WEB: WWW.N-GAGE.COM • PLAYERS: 1-6

PATHWAY TO GLORY

The N-Gage has a game that leaves it covered in glory...

This might just be the game that all you N-Gage owners have been waiting for – depending on how much you like your strategy games. Because *Pathway to Glory* is rather fabulous, knocking this month's other handheld strategy thing into a cocked wizard's hat. *Commandos*-like in style, down to the WW2 setting, *Pathways to Glory* takes you and your team of soldiers through 14 intense and authentic turn-based missions that'll test you to the strategic limits. Not only that, but you can also play live against other gamers, either over the network or via Bluetooth. It takes a bit of getting used to the controls, but once you've sussed them it's a strategic feast. It's a shame this little gem is restricted to one platform, but if you've got an N-Gage and thirst for strategy, you're in for a treat.

Go commando without catching a chill.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 89%

Great strategic stuff that we wouldn't mind seeing on other platforms.

PC CD
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: TIMEGATE • PUBLISHER: ATARI
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE
• CALL: 020 8222 9700 • PLAYERS: 1-8

AXIS AND ALLIES

You want proof of the pointlessness of war? Here it is!

Makes you wonder, doesn't it, that with proper strategy games like *Rome: Total War* available, why anyone would put out something like this. *Axis and Allies* looks nice from a distance, but once you get up close and personal with it you discover that it's actually a mess. Its campaign modes consist of a bunch of unlinked battles and there's little subtlety to the strategic aspect. It has a few nice touches, but if you're a proper strategy fan you'll laugh at it, and if you're not, there are better titles out there to change your mind.

Don't be fooled by all the detail - beneath the surface it's all horribly muddled.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 56%

Uninspired, confused attempt at strategy – don't bother.

GAME BOY ADVANCE PS2 XBOX NINTENDO GAMECUBE
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: GBA • PRICE: £29.99 • DEVELOPER: VICARIOUS VISIONS • PUBLISHER: ATARI • OTHER FORMATS: PS2, XB, GC • CALL: 020 8222 9700 • PLAYERS: 1

SHARK TALE

There's something fishy about this. No, we're not taking the piscine!

Film adaptation number two, and *Shark Tale* bears quite the resemblance to *Shrek 2: Beg for Mercy*. Same developers, similar menus, and decent enough graphics derived from the film. But unlike *Beg For Mercy*, it's incredibly short on fun. It follows the story of the film about as slavishly as it's possible to do, and plays out like a kind of cartoon *Ecco the Dolphin*, with extra rhythm-action bits and a lot less excitement. You swim around, hit things using the power of, er, Fish-Fu, run errands, and eventually fall fast asleep with the fishies long before you've collected the 5,000 that Oscar owes Sykes. Give it a miss.

Small fish, big pond, but Oscar's adventures don't go swimmingly.

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 64%

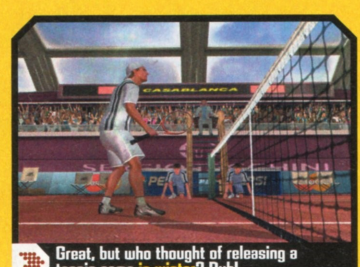
Low on gameplay – another run-of-the-water-mill adaptation.

PS2
• OUT: NOW • FORMAT: PC • PRICE: £29.99
• DEVELOPER: PAM • PUBLISHER: ATARI
• OTHER FORMATS: NONE
• CALL: 020 8222 9700 • PLAYERS: 1-4

TOP SPIN

A decent PC tennis game? That's simply not cricket!

For some reason decent tennis games have studiously avoided the PC like Tim Henman avoids Wimbledon finals. Yes, *Virtua Tennis* made a PC appearance but managed to become rubbish. Now it's the Xbox's piece of tennising excellence to have a go on the PC, and *Top Spin* appears to have made it across in one piece. Which means it plays a great game of tennis (don't try it on a keyboard though), features all the career mode goodies you could hope for, and it's just the thing for a bit of multi-player ball-smashing fun. Ooyah.



Great, but who thought of releasing a tennis game in winter? Duh!

JUDGEMENT

OVERALL 81%

Finally the PC gets a tennis game that's actually worth playing.

Chat More!

It's the biggest free gift ever! *EyeToy: Chat Light* FREE!

PlayStation®2 OFFICIAL magazine-UK

Get chatting on Thursday 27 Jan 2005

For further details about the future of communication
go to **http://www.futurenet.com/ps2officialmaguk**

Official PlayStation 2 Magazine is offering the **biggest free gift in PlayStation 2 history**. Free with the regular mag and playable demo DVD will be another, extra special DVD – *EyeToy: Chat Light**

EyeToy: Chat Light is a videophone application for PS2 that enables you to talk and play games wth friends and fellow *Chat Light* owners face-to-face

**EyeToy: Chat Light* promotion available in selected regions only. For *EyeToy: Chat* to function you will need a network enabled PS2, a broadband connection and an EyeToy camera.*

PHONE NEWS

NOKIA 3230

Due out in January, Nokia's latest trendy 'yoof' phone has plenty to offer beyond its plasticky good looks. Boasting a 1.3 megapixel camera, Push To Talk, 65,000 colour screen, XHTML web browser and Bluetooth compatibility, its packed full of the latest hi-end features. It even has simple movie editing software, so you can shoot video clips, edit them, add your own soundtrack, then them show off to your mates. As for gaming, the phone supports the latest version of Java (which means better graphics and sound), and has several pre-installed titles to get you started. This is one 'entertainment-focused handset' (as they call 'em in the biz) that should actually be genuinely entertaining.

GAME NEWS

BIG BRANDS GET MOBILE

Last month, two massive licensing deals ensured that we should see some very big mobile games in 2005. First, THQ Wireless announced that it had signed a deal to produce games, ring tones, logos and other gumph based around the *Star Wars* movies, including *Episode Three*. Then, Mforma stepped up to reveal that it had set up a similar deal with Marvel, which could result in mobile games based around any of Marvel's 5000 characters. The first titles – co-produced with Activision – will feature *Spider-Man*, *X-Men*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man*. Yawn. Come on let's have some *Dr Strange*, *Nick Fury* or *Silver Surfer*!

TOP 5

THE FIVE TITLES YOU MUST HAVE ON YOUR JAVA PHONE!

1. **PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN**
   One of the best games of 2004
2. **ZOO TYCOON 2**
   Essential strategy fun
3. **SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW**
   Stealth platforming genius
4. **MICRO MACHINES**
   Brilliant conversion of the racing classic
5. **FATAL FORCE**
   Innovative multi-player shoot-'em-up

MOBILE MASTER

Still using your mobile to talk to people? That's so last century! Get up to date with *GM*'s look at mobile gaming!

BLADE TRINITY

DEVELOPER:.....MFORMA

Based around the third movie in Wesley Snipes' vampire bashing trilogy, *Blade Trinity* is a polished top-down shooter. You guide the eponymous hero around a series of increasingly maze-like locations blasting undead baddies, unlocking security doors and following the onscreen radar to meet your mission requirements. Like THQ Wireless' very similar *Red Faction*, the visuals are pure retro chic – chunky but detailed. Controls are sharp, too, even though there's no diagonal movement. If you're looking for some good old mindless blasting action, you should definitely give *Blade* a stab.

Different weapons are needed for multitude of different foes.

Enemies come at ya thick and fast, so stay alert.

OVERALL Cleverly designed old skool action that's definitely worth a play, if only for some late '80s nostalgia.

87%

PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN

DEVELOPER:.....GAMELOFT

Gameloft's latest *Prince of Persia* conversion is another absolute gem, filled with lavishly detailed locations, brilliant enemies and genuinely deep, challenging gameplay. Following the storyline of the console title, you must aid the prince as he attempts to cheat time and save his life from the dark forces of destiny. This involves the best in 2D platform action, as you leap across chasms, swing on ropes, clamber along walls, and marvel at the beautifully designed ancient Persian locations. Combat is given variety by a range of unlockable combos, and exploration is incredibly compelling due to the multi-levelled construction and near-perfect learning curve. A must-have.

You open up mad new moves as you progress through the game.

Don't let her seduce you, she's naughty. But lovely-looking.

OVERALL A good conversion from PS2 to mobile. Featuring the best 2D platformer around, you need this game.

93%

ZOO TYCOON

DEVELOPER:.....IN-FUSIO

Bored of playing endless platformers on your phone? This craftfully scaled-down version of the PC strategy hit should give you something more to think about. Your aim is to build a series of successful zoos by buying animals, keeping them healthy and happy. A very simple icon-driven interface gives you complete control over your tiny zoo and, as with the Tamagotchi craze, creating desirable enclosures for these little critters proves astoundingly addictive. Making money unlocks new animals, and you can even uncover bonus content for the PC version through the fun Photo mode. Any game that lets you take pictures of monkeys is fine by us.

Keeping animals happy is the key to success.

Build interesting enclosures to wow the punters.

OVERALL What's not to like? This cute, clever title is strategy-lite but dangerously addictive.

90%

PLAYMAN WINTER GAMES

DEVELOPER:.....MR GOODLIVING

The brilliantly named Finnish developer Mr Goodliving has produced a range of excellent sports titles – *Winter Games* being the latest and maybe the greatest of the selection. There are four frosty challenges – bobsleigh, biathlon, slalom and ski jump – each requiring well-timed rhythmic button presses, rather than getting you to bash at the keypad like an enraged weirdo. Graphics are as crisp as a December morning, and the gameplay is faultlessly slick and compelling. As usual, you can challenge several mates by taking turns on a single handset, and there are world records to beat for each event. It'll certainly get you through all those cold winter journeys we're forced to make when we'd rather be hibernating somewhere warm.

The slalom is a test of your cornering skills.

Biathlon is a test of skiing and shooting. Tricky...

OVERALL Yet more multi-event excellence from Master Goodliving, this time it's clevely designed seasonal sports fun.

89%

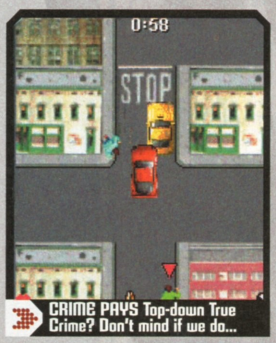
PLAY GAMES WIN CASH

What could be better? Win big this winter with The Mob!

What'll you do next time you're on the bus? Stare out of the window? Chat to the weirdo sitting next to you, maybe? How about playing the latest in mobile games, proving you're the best in the world and bagging yourself a chance at winning £25,000? Sounds good, no?

Well, it couldn't be easier, thanks to top mobile content types, The Mob. As well as providing you with all the latest phone-based gamery, they give fantastic prizes to the top players every month – with £1,000 on the table for the lucky punter who scoops the top score on their featured game. Better yet, next December, the winning gamer from each month will be invited to take part in a live play-off to find the Games Arena Champion Of Champions, with the winner bagging a whopping £25,000.

SLUG-ANOMICS Play Metal Slug on your phone!



CRIME PAYS Top-down True Crime? Don't mind if we do...

Even if you're not quite up to that level of competition, there are still plenty of reasons to join The Mob – such as unlimited downloads of ringtones, wallpapers and a huge range of games!

Don't want to join? No problem – you can still access all The Mob's content and buy any tones, wallpapers or games, take part in the Leaderboards or even challenge a mate to a game. To be in with a chance of winning the cash, though, you'll have to become a member. So what are you waiting for? Get started now by texting MOB GAMES to 87021, and you'll never have to chat to a bus weirdo again!

WHAT'S IN THE ARENA?

Once you've submitted your score to the games arena, check out their site at www.mob.tv/games to see how you size up against other players and check out the other games on offer. They've got everything from conversions of hit console titles such as *Driver* 3 and *Metal Slug* to big-name licenses including *iRobot* and *Platoon*! Alternatively, why not check out the results of last month's Tony Hawk's showdown, read reviews of the latest games and get tips on nailing that all important score. You're going to need all the help you can get to grab that cash...

Check out the reader reviews for the best games! And then add your own.

With new games added every week, you'll never get bored.

And always make sure you're ahead of the pack...

JOIN THE GAMES ARENA TODAY! TEXT MOB GAMES TO 87021 TO GET STARTED!

WINTER SPORTS

This month's challenge is all about keeping a cool head – it's a three-event marathon in *Winter Sports*. The cash and competition spot goes to the highest overall score, so second best isn't an option! That means being at the top of your game in speed-skating, ski-jumping and the biathlon (that's a combo of shooting and cross-country skiing), and putting in a score of 362 or more to be in with a chance at the cash.

To spur you on, why not download another player's results? You can then compete against them as a ghost skier. With the chance to win £25,000 at stake, the competition's bound to be tough – but hey! – you read *GM*: tough is your middle name. So get on the slopes and think about how you're going to spend the cash.

Go! There's cold, hard cash on the line!

Use the ghostly racer to check your skill.

Be careful - the biathlon takes a steady hand...

Bosh! Try again - there's cash on the line for the longest jump.

That's the stuff - well on the way to the top of the leaderboard.

Fly like Eddie The Eagle - and try to avoid landing like him...

16+ You must have permission from the bill-payer to join. As a member of The Mob you can download unlimited content plus receive a free Welcome Pack and regular newsletters packed with special offers and exclusive products. The Mob is a weekly subscription service charged at £1.50 per week billed directly to your mobile phone. Min subscription period applies - see www.mob.tv/help for full details. You have 14 days to cancel your subscription. You may be contacted by The Mob with further info/offers. To unsubscribe write or just send X to 07781484472. The Mob is part of the MonsterMob Group plc family, 76 Church Street, Lancaster, LA1 1ET.

themob

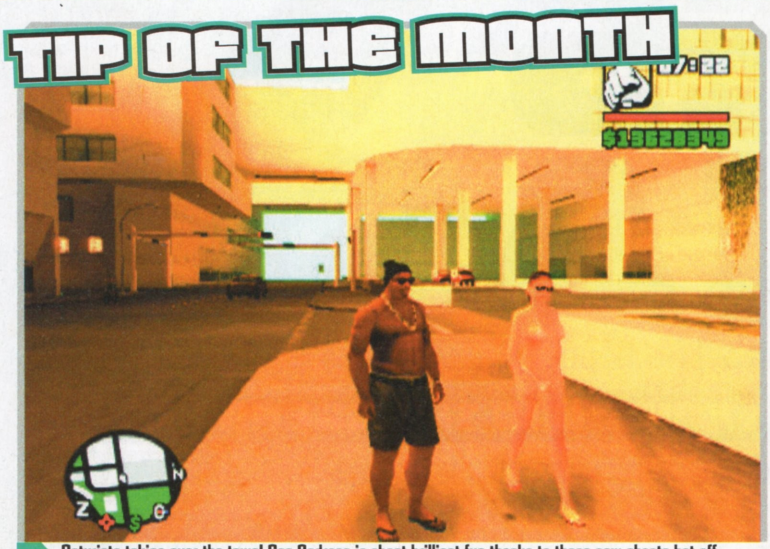
CHEAT MASTER

QUALITY CHEATAGE SINCE 1993

Howdy folks – Tom East here, GM's gorgeous new code girl with a difference. My hair, for a start is so much more bouncy than her's. This month we've once again pulled out all the stops to bring you the crème de la crème of tips from gaming world. I'm particularly proud of the brand new GTA ones. They're more fun than Norwich.

The latest cheats and tips just how you like 'em – fresh!

TIP OF THE MONTH



Naturists taking over the town! San Andreas is chest brilliant fun thanks to these new cheats hot off the press. Anyone for some swing ball or a donkey ride? Er, not that they feature in the beach cheat.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS PS2

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

- SPAWN UNLIMITED VEHICLES
- SUPER ABILITIES
- NOVELTY ITEMS

We managed to dig these cheats up at the last minute, just as we were finishing the issue - enjoy!

SUPER BUNNY HOP

Get on any pedal bike and press L3 to hop - you'll go flying hundreds of feet into the air.

△, □, ○, ○,□, ○, ○, L1, L2, L2, R1, R2.

FROM ZERO TO HERO

100% muscle, the easy way. Sweating away in a gym is for suckers.

△, ↑, ↑, ←, →, □, ○, ←

LIFE'S A BEACH

Pedestrians all spawn as lovely bikini-clad ladies, and vehicles spawn as beach buggies etc.

↑, ↑, ↓, ↓, □, ○, L1, R1, △, ↓.

SAFETY FIRST

Instantly give yourself a parachute - you never know when you'll need one.

←, →, L1, L2, R1, R2 R2, ↑, ↓, →, L1.

SCAWNY CJ

Lose all CJ's fat and muscle and turn super skinny.

△, ↑, ↑, ←, →, □, ○, →.

SPAWN A QUAD

Four wheels are better than two - get a quad bike spawned wherever you're stood.

←, ←, ↓, ↓, ↑, ↑, □, ○, △, R1,R2.

PLYBOY

Spawn a Hydra right in front of CJ.

△, △, □, ○, ⊗, L1, L1, ↓, ↑.

IT'S BEHIND YOU!

Spawns a monster right near you - a Monster truck, that is! Hahahaha!

→, ↑, R1, R1, R1, ↓, △, △, ⊗, ○, L1, L1.

STUNT MAN

Spawns a stunt plane right in front of you. Up up and away!

○, ↑, L1, L2, ↓, R1, L1, L1,

Have some irresponsible fun with your very own stunt plane. Chocks away!

Bunny hops of a magnitude even Bugs himself would swap his carrots for.

Pump your homey up faster than a pack of steroids and a thousand protein shakes.

←, ←, ⊗, △.

CARMOUR PLATED

Whichever vehicle you're in, whether it's a limo, golf cart or BMX, takes on the invulnerability of a tank, and its ability to destroy anything it touches.

L1, L2, L2, ↑, ↓, ↓, ↑, R1, L2, R2.

JUMP! JUMP! JUMP!

CJ can jump ten times higher than normal. Springy.

↑, ↑, △, △, ↑, ↑, ←, →, □, R2, R2.

LARD BUCKET

Turns CJ into a big Rik Waller wanabee.

△, ↑, ↑, ←, →, □, ○, ↓.

HOVER BOVER

Spawn a hovercraft right in front of you

△, △, □, ○, ⊗, L1, L2, ↓, ↓.

Pimped up rides don't come much hotter than this badass 4x4.

GHOST RECON 2

PS2

- INVINCIBILITY
- LEVEL SKIP
- WEAPONS

INVINCIBILITY

Pause the game during a mission, then simply press L1, R2, L2, R1, SELECT

MISSION SELECT

On the title screen, try ⊗, L2, △, R2, SELECT

ALL GUNS

At the title, press ⊗, ←, △, □, ⊗, SELECT

GREATEST CHEATS EVER!

KILL GUARDS TO COLLECT DOG TAGS

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

PS2

PUBLISHER: ..... KONAMI
YEAR OF RELEASE 2002

The Cheat: Collect Dog Tags

The superb sequel to arguably the best PlayStation game of all is also one of the most Easter-egg crammed games of all time. There's literally hundreds of special events to trigger and discover. Perhaps the best bit of all, though, involves toying with enemy guards when collecting dog tags. When you hold up a guard and aim at his head or groin, he'll usually shake and drop his tags. However, some hard nuts refuse to shake their doggies loose, daring you to cap them or spitting out some other smart-arse comment. Simply fire live bullets somewhere nearby them and watch their faces as they give up those goodies sharpish!

Guards can be cocky until you teach them a lesson in respect...

YOUR TOP 10 TIPS

From angry gansters to flying dragons, they're all covered in our favourite cheats.

01 POKEMON RED AND BLUE THROUGH TO FIRERED AND LEAFGREEN

GBA

Trying to catch rare Pokémon in Safari Zone wastes time and costs money. To make things easier, stand on the same patch of grass and keep tapping the D-Pad in the opposite direction to the way you are facing. Pokémon simply pop up without you having to travel anywhere and time won't run out!

Marty Morgan, Trowbridge.

02 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

PS2

Bike Skill and cash tip: Go to the top of Mount Chiliad and get on the mountain bike between 07:00 and 18:00. This activates a race called the 'Chiliad Challenge'. However, Instead of actually competing in the race, quickly cycle off the ramp near the edge of the and keep 360-ing with the bike. The game will think you're still in the race and plonk you back at the top of the course. However, you'll pick up an insane stunt bonus (which translates to hard cash) as well as pumping up your cycling skills!

Pete Cann, Leeds.

03 JAK II: RENEGADE

PS2

Triple your orbs: 1. Finish the

Keep repeating the 'Chiliad Challenge' for a huge stunt bonus.

It's just a shame that you have to beat this dog of a game to actually get the nude cheat, especially when that's the only reason we bought it.

LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE

PC PS2 XBOX

- NAKEDNESS
- FAST CASH
- EASIER DIFFICULTY

NUDE MODE

Complete the game, then purchase the 'Everybody Naked!' secret at the bar for a whopping 269 Secret Tokens. The 'Nude mode' option can now be toggled in the 'Extras' section of the bonus options menu.

EASIER SUB-GAMES

Lose a game repeatedly until you get the blessed option saying 'Should we make it easier on you?'

EASY DOLLARS

Go to the Greek Quad and hang out near the frat boy who buys pictures. Snap piccies of the fit cheerleaders that are practicing. Sell them to said frat boy. This can be done repeatedly without penalty, making Larry one rich student.

SIMPLE FLYER DISTRIBUTION

When someone throws an airplane, run towards them holding Left to grab it beforehand.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

CUBE

- STRATEGIES
- UNLOCK CHAMBERS
- EXTRA MODES

UNLOCK REEL SELECT

Finish the game on the respective difficulty (Beat Adult to unlock Kids and Adult)

UNLOCK V-RATED MODE

Finish the game in Adult mode

UNLOCK ULTRA V-RATED MODE

Finish the game in V-Rated mode

USE THE SIX CANNON

To utilise the Six Cannon in battle or anywhere else for that matter, you'll firstly need an almost entire bar of VFX (plus the four or five mini-bars). Hold the Z button until it gets to the last two VFX. A cannon will appear and blast a large beam with the switched character in it. Save it for the bosses!

CHAMBERS

Unlock the following chambers thusly...

Chamber 1.....Defeat the first guardian
Chamber 4.....Defeat the first guardian
Chamber 7 .....Collect all film canisters in Reel 1
Chamber 18 .....Finish Chamber 17
Chamber 19.....Defeat Sgt. Big John in Reel 3 on V-rated mode
Chamber 21 .....Complete Chamber 3
Chamber 23.....Achieve an RV against Big John in UV-rated mode
Chamber 27 .....Finish Chamber 26
Chamber 30.....Achieve an RV against Alastor in Adult mode
Chamber 32 .....Get a RV in Chamber 23
Chamber 35 .....Finish the game in Adult mode
Chamber 36 .....Complete Chamber 27

INFINITE V-POINTS

During the first few levels, you'll

Save your precious Six Cannon for the guys who really deserve it - the bosses!

TOP 20 CHEATS

Oh cheaty cheats how we adore thee! Check out our updated UK Top 20...

01 NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

PS2 XBOX CUBE

ENTER IT: PS2 ←, ←, →, ⓧ, ⓞ, →, L1, R1 XBOX ←, ←, →, X, X, →, L, R CUBE ←, ←, →, X, X, →, L, R
WHAT IT DOES: Get $1000 in career and unlock the RX-8 and Skyline in Quick Race

02 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

PS2
ENTER IT: At any time while playing press R1, R2, L1, ⊗, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
WHAT IT DOES: Full Body armour, full health, respect and $250,000. Anyone for the casino?

03 CALL OF DUTY FINEST HOUR

PS2 XBOX CUBE
ENTER IT: Pick up a non-default weapon, reach a checkpoint, die and restart from that checkpoint. You'll lose said weapon but you can continue to pick up ammo until you re-find it.

04 THE INCREDIBLES

PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA
ENTER IT: PS2 XBOX CUBE Pause the game, select 'secrets' and enter the code 'unlock'. GBA Type 'YKIF' on the password screen.

05 FIFA 2005

PS2 XBOX CUBE PC
ENTER IT: Hiraly, Le Saux, Scimeca, Unsworth, Edworthy, De Pedro, Izzet, Oakley, Johnson, Yakubu, Powler.
WHAT IT DOES: Bargain Premiership Team.

06 PRINCE OF PERSIA: WARRIOR WITHIN

PS2 XBOX CUBE PC
ENTER IT: Finish the game having collected all nine life upgrades.
WHAT IT DOES: unlocks alternative ending.

07 GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

PS2 XBOX CUBE
ENTER IT: At the extras menu, press ↓, ←, ↑, ←, →, ↓, ←, ↑.
WHAT IT DOES: Unlocks multi-player skins.

08 THE GETAWAY: BLACK MONDAY

PS2
ENTER IT: During the intro movie press ↑, ↑, ←, ←, →, →, ⓞ, ⓞ, ↓.
WHAT IT DOES: Double Health.

09 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

PS2
ENTER IT: When the ball crosses the line, pause before your player celebrates. Watch a replay. Each time you watch a replay a goal is added to your score.

10 HALO 2

XBOX
ENTER IT: Complete the single player campaign on any difficulty and finish one undone tutorial on the last level.
WHAT IT DOES: Foundation Map.

11 THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

PS2 XBOX CUBE
ENTER IT: XBOX First enter ← + Y + ↓ + A + X to get the cheat gnome code. Then enter ↓ + B + → + X + ←. For the PS2 code check to tips book.
PS2 Enter ⓞ, L1, L2, R2, R1 (cheat gnome), then press Ⓐ, R2, L1, ⊗, ⓞ.
CUBE Enter ↓, L, Z, A, X, ← (cheat gnome), then press B, ←, X, R, L
WHAT IT DOES: Power Socials (Xbox).

12 WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW

PS2
ENTER IT: Complete every Legend challenge.
WHAT IT DOES: WWE Legends Movesets.

13 THE SIMPSONS HIT & RUN

PS2 XBOX CUBE
ENTER IT: PS2 Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ, Ⓐ XBOX Y, Y, Y, Y CUBE Y, Y, Y, Y
WHAT IT DOES: Fast Cars (enter these at the options menu).

14 THE SIMS 2 PC

ENTER IT: Press CTRL + Shift + C to get the cheat window up, then enter this: intProp maxNumOfVisitingSims 8
WHAT IT DOES: Invites people in your party.

15 KILLZONE PS2

ENTER IT: Whilst sprinting, release the run button. At the same time, switch weapons.
WHAT IT DOES: Your new weapon will instantaneously appear in your hands.

16 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE PS2 XBOX CUBE

ENTER IT: Complete the game in Hard Mode.
WHAT IT DOES: Captain of Lothlorien, the Elf Haldir.

17 SONIC HEROES PS2

ENTER IT: Hold ⊗ and Ⓐ just after selecting a level in 2-Player mode.
WHAT IT DOES: Metal Characters in 2 player mode.

18 LORD OF THE RINGS - BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH PC

ENTER IT: Team up Cavalry with Cavalry Archers. Use archers to relentlessly bombard pike men before finally letting the cavalry loose.

19 EYE TOY:PLAY 2 PS2

ENTER IT: Don't do proper baseball swings. Short, punchy hits will get you higher scores in this game.
WHAT IT DOES: Baseball Game tip.

20 SHREK 2 PS2 XBOX CUBE GBA

ENTER IT: PS2 Begin the first level, then press Start. Go to your scrapbook and press ←, ↑, ⊗, ⓞ, ←, ↑, ⊗, ⓞ, ←, ↑, ⊗, ⓞ, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑. You should now hear the words "That's what I call spreading joy."
XBOX press ←, ↑, A, B, ←, ↑, A, B, ←, ↑, A, B, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑.
CUBE press ←, ↑, A, B, ←, ↑, A, B, ←, ↑, A, B, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑, ↑.
WHAT IT DOES: All levels are now available to play.

game without completing any in-city challenges. 2. Go to the stadium and select the jet board challenge. 3. Earn a bronze award, go for the silver but instead leave the arena and STAY ON your jet board until the timer has run out. 4. Go to any of the city egg hunts and complete. Right, you should have earned only one orb but the robot dude will reward you with three! Cheers robot dude!

This works for every challenge. Bargain!

Simon Moore, Lincolnshire.

04 GTA: SAN ANDREAS

PS2

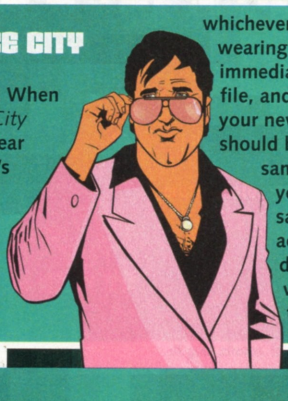
Jetpack cheat: During play stand still and then enter: R1, L2, R1, R2, ↑, ↓, ←, →. Repeat once again for the cheat to work. Happy flying everybody! Jepacks rule, no?

William Allen, Staffordshire.

05 GTA: VICE CITY

PS2

Quick costumes: When you finish *Vice City* you're able to wear any of the game's outfits. Begin a new game then save it. After that, load your completed file and pick whichever outfit you fancy wearing. If you immediately save that file, and then switch to your new game you should be wearing the same threads from your completed save without actually having to do any of the hard work getting them!



George Smith, Lowestoft.

06 SPYRO: SEASON OF ICE

GBA

Infinite Lives: Travel to the House Of Winter Fairies and from the portal go down screen until you reach a jar that contains an extra life. Enter the portal to be transported to the house of Autumn Fairies. If you return to then return to the House of Winter Fairies via that

Cheat Master

Not as pretty as it's Xbox and PC cousins, but a decent game nonetheless.

encounter puzzles that involve hitting three blocks using Sylvia's Replay power. However, if you shoot the blocks with Sylvia's guns, V-Point Coins will spill out. Keep blasting until you've got all the V-Points you want, you greedy things.

TRON 2.0: KILLER APP

GBA

- UNLOCKABLES

UNLOCK MINI-GAMES

At the Press Start screen enter Left x 4, Up, Right, Down x 2, Select.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR

PC

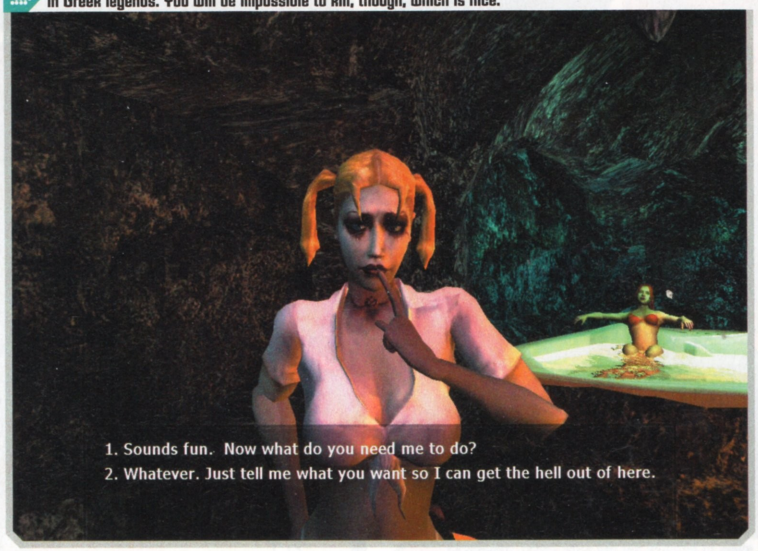
- NOVELTY MODES
- TONS OF AMMO

At the title menu, select the 'Extra Content' sub-menu. Then select 'Cheat Code' to bring up an entry field. Type the following codes:

Big Head Mode .....NICKWEST
Realistic Damage.....SWEDISHARMY
Unlimited Ammo .....MERCENARIES

Transform the most realistic shooter of all time into a wanton fest of cartoon violence with our unlimited ammo cheat.

Unfortunately, our God mode cheat won't turn you into Zeus and let you pull all the fit looking chicks like in Greek legends. You will be impossible to kill, though, which is nice.



SHARK TALE

CUBE

- INVINCIBILITY

INVINCIBLE OSCAR:

Go to the controller configuration screen, hold left trigger and press A, A, A, ← (2), Y, Right trigger, ↓, Y, Y. Oscar will now be invulnerable.

VAMPIRE THE MASQUERADE: BLOODLINES

PC

- EXTRA STAT POINTS
- CODES

INFINITE STATS CHEAT

Choose a base vampire type and you'll be given set stat points to distribute. Once you've done this, return to the base selection and select the same base as before. Don't click on another base as doing this resets your character's stats! When you return to the stat distribution page your character will retain the stats that you'd previously given them, meaning you can power them up to your heart's content. However, make sure that you don't fill all the stats as soon as possible because you won't be able to start the game if you've got left over points.

CHEAT CODES

Begin the game with the '-console 1' command line parameter. Press ~ whilst playing and type one of the following codes to activate the corresponding cheat function.

RESULT	CHEAT CODE
God mode	god
Invisible to everyone	notarget
No clipping mode	noclip
Get experience points	giftxp [number]
Most items and weapons	impulse 101
Spawn weapon; cursor up or down to scroll console list	give item_w_
Spawn vampire artifact or book; cursor up or down to scroll console list	give item_p_
Spawn item; cursor up or down to scroll console list	give item_g_
Spawn money item; cursor up or down to scroll console list	give item_m_
Spawn clothing; cursor up or down to scrollconsole list	give item_a_
Crash game	give weapon_physcannon
Exit to the desktop	quit

FINAL FANTASY 1 & 2: DAWN OF SOULS

GBA

- NEW DUNGEONS
- BERET SHRINES

The Hardest Games in the World

They're tough enough to make the facially tatooed weep!

VIEWTIFUL JOE

CUBE

PUBLISHER: .....CAPCOM
YEAR OF RELEASE.....2003

The belated return to form of the 2D fighter made us weep tears of unbridled joy here at *GM* Towers. Mind you, *Joe* also made us weep with frustration as we walked away from the Cube having had our arses whipped for the thousandth time. It's still an ace game though.

HARDEST BIT: The bosses in this game are uniformly a nightmare, but especially hard to beat was the second one, a monster of a fellow by the name of Hulk Davidson (The Iron Ogre). To prevail, slow down and dodge his attacks, then speed punch him into submission. When Hulk charges jump onto the nearby platform so he crashes into the wall and knocks himself senseless. If he fires rockets use slow mo and dodge. Repeat until he's dead, then go and get horribly slaughtered on the next rock-hard level.

Spoiler!

Get a handy mirror (make sure it's not attached to a wardrobe) to read this. Very Harry Potter!

HALF LIFE 2 PC

The Administrator (Wallace Breen) wants to escape the earth via teleportation. Gordon and Alyx destroy the teleporter and – Kaboom! – there's a big explosion and time freezes. Then our buddy the G-Man drops by and says he'll call on Gordon again when he is needed next. WTH does that mean? Is Alyx dead? And is this the most anti-climactic ending ever? All will surely be revealed in the inevitable Half Life 3...

YOUR TOP 10 TIPS

same portal, the jar'll be there again – magically recreated! Simply repeat as often as you need to keep gaining extra lives.

Zak Slavin, Jarrow.

07 HALO 2 XBOX

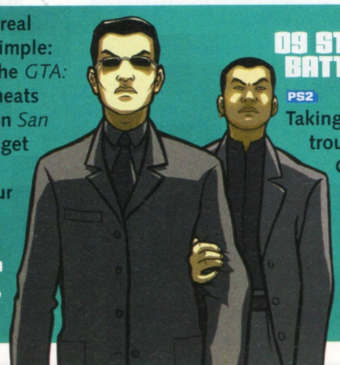
Destructible vehicles: If you're having a hard time against enemies in vehicles, you'll probably not aiming for the right places. Warthogs hate hub-cap shots, shoot the wings of Ghosts and when you come up against tanks simply aim for the body with a rocket launcher.

Govind Sandh, Bucks.

08 GTA: SAN ANDREAS PS2

This one is real quick and simple: almost all the *GTA: Vice City* cheats also work on *San Andreas* so get rummaging through your back issues of *GM*!

Steven Mianta, Cumbria.



09 STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT PS2

Taking out troublesome AT-ATs: Grab yourself a snowspeeder, go land next to an ally solder and order them to pile-in. Find the nearest AT-AT

Head to the Peninsula of Power and tool your party up big time.

SECRET DUNGEONS
Defeat all four arch fiends. Each new dungeon features random maps, exclusive items, and guardians from other *Final Fantasy* Games.

UNLOCK EARTHGIFT SHRINE
Defeat Lich. (Located near Temple of Chaos)

UNLOCK HELLFIRE CHASM
Defeat Marilith. (Located in the Dragon Islands)

UNLOCK LIFESPRING GROTTO
Defeat Kraken. (Located near the canal by Melmond)

UNLOCK WHISPERWIND COVE
Defeat Tiamat. (Located in the rivers near Ice Cave)

PENINSULA OF POWER
This tiny piece of land is located northeast of the town of Pravoka. From Pravoka, first head South to the mountains, then east until you reach the dock, then head north. You'll find extra-tough monsters that'll help you level up sharpish as well as collect some powerful equipment, including an Ice Shield (from Winter Wolf) and Great Axe (Minotaur Zombie).

TOAD MEMORY GAME
In *FF2*, if you level up the Toad spell to lv16, the faces on the memory game become toads. Prizes will also change, granting Genji equipment for many rankings, and even a Masamune for a no-miss game.

SOUL OF REBIRTH
After you've completed the main quest, an additional option will appear on the *FFII* main menu. Select Soul of Rebirth to begin this new journey.

UNLOCK SOUND TEST
Beat *Final Fantasy 1* and *2* once to unlock a sound test.

FFI MINI GAME
While on the ship, hold down A and continuously tap B. Soon, a sliding tile mini-game will appear. The aim of this game is to put the numbered tiles in order from one to 15. The better you do, the more items and cash you'll collect.

LINK'S GRAVE
In *FFI* when you visit Elfheim, press A on the left most tombstone behind the inn. 'Here lies Link' will appear, Link of course being the famous star of the *Legend of Zelda* series.

MARIO PARTY 6

CUBE

- ☑ NEW CHARACTER
- ☑ GOOD LUCK

PLAY AS TOADETTE
Put 30 Stars in the Star Bank.

CLOCKWORK CASTLE BOARD
Put 100 Stars in the Star Bank.

CONTROL DICE IN SOLO MODE
Say a number before rolling the die to increase the chance of that number appearing.

DROP BLOCKS IN SHUT YOUR MOUTH
Say "Zero" to drop blocks on enemies.

MONKEY BOMBS IN WORD HERD
At any time say "Ukiki". This'll make that mad monkey chuck bombs.

You'll be squids in with *Mario Party* thanks to our codes...

CONSOLETATION ZONE

***GM* - coming to the aid of stuck gamers since 1993!**

BLUE MOON

GBA

Dear *GM*, PLEASE help me! I was wondering how to get the blue feather (the thing used to propose marriage) on *Harvest Moon: Friends of Mineral Town* on the GBA.

Robert Tindale, Telford.

Phwoar - look at the set of pigtails on her!

Hey Rob. You can buy the blue feather from most stores in the game for 1,000 gold, but it won't be available before your heart has turned orange. You then have to sweet-talk your babe until the heart turns red, at which point you should present your gift. Hopefully by now she'll accept your proposal. Hope that solves your problem, and don't forget to send us an invite to the wedding!

ON THIN ICE

PS2

Hi *GM*. I'm a sad 34 year old, and I'm stuck on *Spyro: Year of the Dragon* on PS2. I've completed the whole game, bar 44 gems on Icy Peak. They're under the ice and I cannot break through! PLEASE HELP ME!

Gozzy, via email.

Go back to Icy Peak and you should be able to spot a big white star-shaped crack in the ice, lurking in the centre of the spot you're on about. From the walkway, jump as high as you can and glide to the middle of the room. Just before touchdown, go into one of Spyro's super head-bashes. With any luck this'll shatter the ice and expose a pool of water, which you can then swim into to collect those final 44 gems.

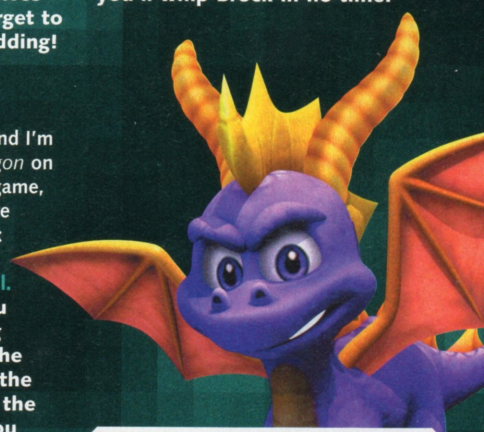
YELLOW FEVER

GBA

Hi. I really need help on *Pokémon Yellow*. I'm trying to beat Brock but he has a type advantage. Could you tell me where I can find a strong water or grass type in Pewter City?

Mark Cook, Dundee.

Unfortunately, Mark, fighting Brock in *Pokémon Yellow* is harder than in the Red or Blue versions 'cause you actually can't get a water or grass type *Pokémon* at this stage in the game. You'll will still be able to find two Pokémon that'll cause Brock all kinds of problems, though. Mankeys hang around on Route 22, or you might want to catch a Caterpie or Metapod and nurture it to evolve into a Butterfree. Butterfree's learn Confusion at LV10 and a Mankey will learn Low Kick at LV9, both of which are crushingly effective against Brock. In the actual battle, Brock's Geodude shouldn't be too tricky, so save your best powers for his Onix. Beware Bide and Screech attacks! With your two new guys, though, you'll whip Brock in no time.



GOT A PROBLEM? STUCK IN A GAME?
WE CAN HELP! EMAIL IT TO US AT GAMESMASTERTIPS@FUTURENET.CO.UK, SUBJECT CONSOLETATION OR WRITE TO CONSOLETATION ZONE, GAMESMASTER, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH. BA1 2BW. IF WE CAN'T HELP - YOU'VE HAD IT!

BAD CHEATS!

The bit where Tom gets tortured...

We won't just torture Tom for the hell of it. He has to do something really bad first. Like dig out a suckass cheat that doesn't work. So if you find a cheat in the magazine that doesn't work, write to Bad Cheats, GamesMaster, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. Then we torture him.

Just like in the film. Take your time, young Skywalker...

and aim for a leg with the tow-line. That's the tricky part but once you're hooked on, simply fly around the beast and watch it go down.

Simon Ward, Cleveland.

10 SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

XBOX

Product Placement: On the Paris-Nice train level, the second carriage contains a guardroom. Knock the guy out and take a look behind the fenced door: one of the magazines is actually the cover of a *Price of Persia* strategy guide.

Alex Britnell, Aylsham.

GM'S TOP 5 MOST WANTED TIPS

01: MORE CALL OF DUTY: FINEST HOUR This is a call to arms for all you budding soldiers - send in tips and battle tactics.

02: BURNOUT 3 The best racer on console bar none. But has anyone discovered any cheats to make this game even better?

03: MERCENARIES Cheats please. As soon as you can!

04: LORD OF THE RINGS: BATTLE FOR MIDDLE EARTH This game is HARD, and we need your help. Tactics are great, codes would be even better.

05: ZELDA: THE MINISH CAP All Zeldas have loads of cool secret areas, and we're sure this one is no exception. Tell us how to find them.

As well as that lot, we want your best tips and secrets for any game. Email them to gamesmastertips@ futurenet.co.uk or by post to My Top Ten Tip, GamesMaster, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. The best tip every month gets a free game on the format of your choice. But make 'em original!

KNOW HOW TO...

TIPSTER
Dave Harrison

Time to complete:
Ooh, a good 8 hours
Best bit:
There's a great deal of satisfaction once you've collected all the export cars. Almost Pokémental.
Hardest bit:
Zero's missions are tough, especially the Supply Lines one. Why does Zero want his plane back? He's got a shop full of them. And why does he have to whine...

WHERE ARE YOU STUCK?

Vehicle mission
Just press that R3.
TURN OVER TO PAGE 107

BMX Mental
Then pass the Los Santos bike park trial
ON PAGE 105

Can't fly a RC plane
Then you'll struggle with Supply Line. Find out how we managed it.
JUST LOOK BELOW

State-sized road race
Four sets of challenges but only position you can afford to come in
ALL THE TIPS ON 106

Just truck it
How to handle the tankers
ON PAGE 107

Hey to her heart?
How to date Millie
IN THE HEIST MISSIONS

Car locations
Where to find that PCR-900 bike from?
ACROSS ON PAGE 105

Break the casino
It's easier than gambling
BOTTOM RIGHT OF 105

SAN ANDREAS ODD JOBS

REACHING THAT 100%

We've told you how to complete the plot missions, we've pointed where every gang tag, photo-op, horseshoe and oyster is, so now here's every side vehicle and assets mission explained. We told you it was a big game...

ZERO'S MISSION

Available once you've bought Zero's shop. You're awarded with the asset on completion

AIR RAID

Pick out the pattern of the assault – which direction the planes come from – so you're able to pick them off before they get too close. Also, once a plane has dropped its bomb, ignore it; the damage has been done, and you'll get no points for taking it down.

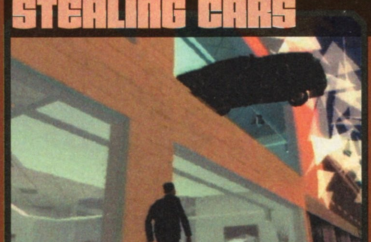
SUPPLY LINES

A very tough, cruel mission. Quickly take out the three closest couriers before they get too far. Go for the guy on the bike immediately to the left, then double back for the two vans. Then head downtown to the nearest target, which is one a motorbike and is the hardest target and finally the white van. Try to fly at a decent height just above or below the street lamps and, once they are in range, hammer them with the machine gun. Be relentless, as that first sweep in is vital. To pass this you need a bit of luck – if the last two downtown targets are close together you've got a good chance. But if you're get into a long chase you won't have enough fuel to get back to Zero's shop, as for some reason he wants his plane back.

NEW MODEL ARMY

When leaving the base for first time, pick up a plank for the first bridge gap, then move the first can. Now simply concentrate on taking out the three enemy tanks with the bombs. Take your time, moving the camera to make sure you're directly above, before dropping the bomb. Make sure you're not caught in the explosion. Once the tanks are gone, there's nothing that can damage the Bandit, so spend the rest of the time building bridges and clearing cans. Easy compared to the first two.

STEALING CARS



Available once you've bought Wang Cars – opposite the CJ's garage in Doherty.

ZEROING IN

Move quickly to hit the signal points, and eventually you'll see the purple target car. Chase it and either ram the back bumper or clip its tail to sending it spinning out. Once you've scared the driver sufficiently she'll abandon the ride, so take it back to the garage.

TEST DRIVE

This is a pure test of driving skills, so, if you haven't already done it, a trip to the Driving School might be worth it. Don't be afraid to pause and look at the map to make sure you take the turns as Cesar. Hit the nitro as soon as Cesar does and be ready to back up quickly when he drives you into a trap. Well done Cesar.

CUSTOMS FAST TRACK

Be careful with the crates, as you don't want to destroy the cars. Use Select to change to a camera angle you're comfortable with and use the shadow to help with positioning. Once you've finished moving all three, there's three waves of thugs to take out. Waste no time in engaging them and have a decent weapon handy.

PUNCTURE WOUNDS

You have only three stingers to use, and you must be in front of the target car to use them. As soon as you're ahead, don't hesitate – just hit circle. The target car sticks to a fairly straight route taking the freeway out of San Fierro, then going over the main bridge into the east part of Whetstone.

MORE ODD JOBS

This is available as soon as you've learn the bike basics, but improve your rating first.

BMX CHALLENGE
This is found in the Bike Park in Glen Park, Los Santos. You must have at least 20% Cycling ability, but to successfully complete the mission you may need a lot more. Riding up and down the half-pipe build or round the bowl for a significant amount of time is one way of improving it. To complete the challenge, you must pass through each corona which will add ten seconds to your time. Go for the easy coronas first, to build up enough time to go for the harder ones later on.

CHILIAD CHALLENGE
You need a Cycling skill of over 40% and be at the top of Mount Chiliad between 07.00 and 18.00. You need to win race to unlock the next – there's three in total. General tips, use the R1 to powerslide round corners. Use R1 and square together for emergency stops. Save the pedalling and CJ's energy for the straights. Keep increasing your cycling skill.

The NRG challenge is like Tony Hawk's, but harder.

Scotch Bonnet Yellow Route:
Get used to using the brakes for the first twisty section, then increase the pedalling for the straighter end section.
Birdseye Winder Yellow Route:
Watch for the hairpin turns at checkpoints 9, 14 and 16. Then there's an opportunity to pedal furiously after checkpoint 21.
Cobra Run:
Really hard. Ignore the other competitors. Take care on the wooden boardwalk using sensible use of both brakes. There's a jump after the boardwalk, so build up speed. Then after the fierce hairpin just go for speed enough to close-up on the other two competitors.

SHOOTING RANGE CHALLENGE
This is located in any of the larger Ammunation Stores. There's four stages to complete – Pistol, SMG, Shotgun and AK-47 – each with three rounds. Having a high ratings on these weapons will speed up your reload time, which will help. Fire in short bursts so you don't squander ammo and lose time reloading. Your pistol rating will be maxed out if you complete the whole challenge.

If you fail, you have to start the whole thing again.

COURIER MISSIONS
These involve throwing a package through a corona from a bike of some sort. Each mission has four stages, each with multiple drops. Money is awarded for how many packages you have left (so be accurate with your throws) and time left (so be quick). Use the drive-by controls when making the drop. Always plan your journey using the map, remembering that your start point will also be your final destination. Don't always rely on the radar map. Use short cuts when you can.

Locations
Los Santos:
Roboi Food Mart, Commerce
San Fierro:
Happy Shopper in Queens Las Ventura: Burger Shot, Redsands East

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS
After finishing the Wang Cars mission you can return to the docks to find a list of cars that need exporting. There's three lists of 10 to complete. You have to load each one onto a the ship in the San Fierro used in Customs Fast Track. You can drive them up, which is tricky, or use the crane. Whenever you get into a car that's on the export list you'll be informed by a text message. Take it to a safe house garage, then you can take to the docks later.

Board One
Patriot: Easter Bay Chemicals/any Military Base
Sanchez bike: Any town in the country
Stretch: Las Ventura Strip/Hashbury
Peltzer: Vank Hoff Hotel in Valet missions
Remington: Near train station in Little Mexico (LS)
Buffalo: Next to Catalina's hut
Sentinel: Near Jizzy's club
Infernus: In San Fierro district of Paradisio/LV
Camper: Top of Mount Chiliad
Admiral: Most parking lots/Doherty (SF)

Board Two
Slamvan: LV Strip/Dowtown LS
Blista Compact: Wang Cars/SF Airport
Stafford: In Queens, San Fierro/Hotel in Garcia
Sabre: Popular car used by Ballas/freeway (SF)
FCR-900 bike: Get all silvers in Bike School/LS Mansion
Cheetah: Often seen in Prickle Pine (LV)
Rancher: Try Lil Probe Inn/countryside
Stallion: Juniper Hill/Dowtown San Fierro
Tanker: Lots on the freeways and country roads
Comet: Popular in Prickle Pine (LV)/Avispa (SF)

Board Three
Blade: Car park by Zero's
Freeway bike: Seen in Whetstone and Bone County
Mesa: Countryside at base of Mount Chiliad
ZR-350: Loads in Prickle Pine or the Strip (LV)
Euros: Las Ventura, try near Camel's Toe
Banshee: The Strip (LV)/Airport (SF)
Super GT: Get all bronze in Driving School
Journey: Top of Mt Chiliad/Vinewood studio
Huntley: Hashbury (SF)/Prickle Pine (LV)
BF Injection: Beaches near Avispa and Santa Maria

FREIGHT TRAIN MISSIONS
These become available after completing Yay Kay Boom. Just jack a train at any station and press R3. You have to take the train to five stops and stop the train with the engine positions in the red marker. There's two levels to complete, you get $50,000 on completion. Keep the speed at a steady 45, slowing down for sharp corners. Remember it take a long time to slow a train down, so approach the delivery points cautiously. Check the map and distances.

These are time consuming but fairly easy to do.

THE GYMS
Each city has a gym. Go to each one, defeat the instructor to learn a new set of moves. You have to have work out until you have a 'buff' muscle status before you're allowed to learn the moves.

NRG-500 CHALLENGE
In the dry dock in Easter Basin Docks, San Fierro. Collect the easier coronas to build up time, then go for the higher ones. Use the left analogue to control the bike in the air so you can prepare for landings - if you land backwards you're likely to fall off. Look for the shadows of the coronas for positioning.

LOWRIDER RIDER CHALLENGE
You need a car with hydraulics for this. Take a Voodoo/Blade to the chop shop to get some, or check out the street where Cesar lives. Then take the car to Unity Train Station and approach the mechanic stood outside. During the challenge, really flick the analogue stick and pay attention to the rhythm rather than when the arrow aligns in the circle.

HEIST MISSIONS

Available once you've done the Explosive Situations mission for Woozie.

ARCHITECTURAL ESPIONAGE
This can be tricky, as there's a big police presence on the return home – so here's some tips. Use your fists to take down the tourist with the camera so you don't attract attention. Leave a decent getaway vehicle on the sidewalk, about ten yards from the door, and enter the building with you weapons concealed. On your descent, there will be a cop on every floor of stairs, so stay low and use an effective short-range weapon. There's health on the first floor. Take care of the guards in the lobby before making for the door. Once outside, simply sprint for your getaway vehicle and leave quickly – don't fight. Once you have breathing space, pause and look at the map to plot your way to the Four Dragon's Casino. Remember, you're going to the garage round the side NOT Woozie's office.

KEY TO HER HEART
A mission for the patient. When you follow Millie, she stops at nearly every traffic light, so always stop a long way back. A bike is the best vehicle to use when you want to drive casual. Change into gimp suit in the Sex Shop, but when you leave, waste no time at all in getting back on Millie's trail. Continue the tail to her house. The dude you have to whack is the first guy you see coming from the west. He won't have a shirt on.

DATING MILLIE
This is tricky, as catching her at home is really tough. She's supposed to finish work at 2.00 a.m, but we have most luck around four or five in the afternoon. Make a note of the time when you first date her and then return at that time. Dating Millie is tough, but here's some tips.

Increase you Sex Appeal. Clothes from Victim help as do Blond Cornrows.

Turn up in a good, undamaged car and drive carefully when she's with you.

She likes dancing, so take her to the disco behind the Camel's Toe at the south end of the strip.

Buy the safe house in Prickle Pine, so you can quickly change into the Gimp Suit before you meet her. The Gimp Suit is a REAL winner.

Just go with Gimp suit. Don't try and be fancy.

Only after about 40% progress will she give you the keycard. Or you could shoot her.

DAM AND BLAST
A silenced pistol is very useful for this mission, so make sure you're prepared. Once you're in the plane, start your ascent early as your target is quite high. The chute drop down should pose no problems, but you don't have to hit the landing target directly. You can land in the water and climb up to it. For some reason you have to pick up the knife provided, but the silence pistol makes things easier for silent kills. Use the shadows and plant the bombs methodically. The mission can be completed even if you raise the alarm.

COP WHEELS
This is tough as there's a massive police presence and a time limit. Here's general tips. Once you get a bike – get onto the freeway as quickly as possible. There's always access by the bridges that cross over the freeways. Going through the city is dangerous.

The Packer Truck drives on the freeway in clockwise direction. If the trucker is on the other side of town, use this to your advantage by travelling in anti-clockwise direction – you'll meet it quicker. Use the map to help make your decisions. Approach each bike armed with a pistol, so you can cap the cop if he tries to escape on the bike. Anything larger than a pistol/machine pistol could destroy the bike. Always drive on the right side of the freeways. Watch your speed going up the Packer truck.

One you're on the freeway you can't be caught.

UP, UP AND AWAY

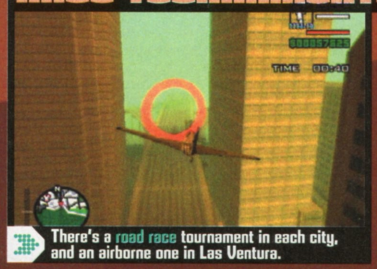
You have one opportunity to get into the military base; when the gate opens up for leaving armoured jeep. Kill the sentry then sprint to the left, pausing only to dispense with any other soldiers. Get to the path between the back of the warehouse and the wire fence, thus avoiding many of the guards. Make your way to the top left of the camp, then take a right. Scale the fence stopping you from approaching the heli-pad by using a group of crates directly south of the target. Follow the stairs to the helipad, clear the area of soldiers, before manning the mini-gun to take out the two gunships. When picking up the van, remember that the right analogue controls the winch and circle activates the magnet. Once it's attached keep the van high so it doesn't swing too much.

Take out the gunships, so you're not chased.

BREAKING THE BANK AT CALIGULA'S

Conceal your weapons when entering the staff only section. Get close, throw the gas into the ventsquare up to the hole, and tap circle. Use the night vision goggles. Use the forklift truck to open the garage gate. Keep ahead of the AI help to clear the path to the vaults. Pick up the Satchel Charges to use on the generators – leave the room before detonating. When escaping, look for the body armour and drinks machines to restore health. Move quickly on the roof, ignore the helicopter if you haven't got a rocket launcher. Press L1 to pick up the parachute. Immediately activate the parachute so you can glide to the police helicopter, or escape by car.

RACE TOURNAMENTS


There's a road race tournament in each city, and an airborne one in Las Ventura.

The locations show up as chequered flags on the map after you've completed the Deconstruction Mission and passed driving school.

GENERAL TIPS

Obvious one, but make sure your driving skill is high before you start. It should make each vehicle easier to handle. It's worth waiting till the riots are going on in Los Santos, before attempting the races there, as there's less traffic on the streets. In the bike races, ride down the middle of the roads to avoid both sets of traffic. On the freeway, use the hard shoulders. Also use the analogue stick to lean forward slightly to become more aerodynamic.

Watch out for the aggressive AI drivers

Pause and the look at the map if you're unsure of the location of the next checkpoint. Never take a shortcut unless you're 100% sure.

Look for the arrows in each checkpoint indicating the next direction.

LOS SANTOS - LITTLE MEXICO

Lowrider Race
You should be able to make up for cautious cornering with the Lowrider's top speeds on the straights.

Little Loop
This course is hilly, so concentrate on keeping the NGR-500 bike straight while in the air for safe landings.

Backroad Wanderer
Watch out for the turn after the thirteenth checkpoint. Many FCR-500 riders will come off so use both brakes to slow down.

City Circuit
Negotiating the freeway is the tough bit here, so pause and use that map.

Vinewood
Tough Sunrise race. Keep away from the aggressive AI racers in the early stages and try to avoid going airborne in the windy hill section.

Freeway
This is a Super GT race. Watch out for the tight corner in Commerce, and take it easy coming off the freeway slip roads.

Into the Country
Use the speed of the Bullet to get an early lead on the straights. Then take your time on the tricky country bits.

Badlands A/Badlands B
You'll recognise these from the Catalina country missions. The trick is to avoid taking risky cross country shortcuts – stick to the dirt tracks. Don't risk the barn jump if you haven't got the necessary speed.

SAN FIERRO - WANG CARS

Dirtbike Danger
A Sanchez challenge that shouldn't cause too many problems if you've a decent bike handling stat.

Bandito County
Make sure you drive right through the fjord to get across the river and watch out for the last checkpoint – its under the freeway.

Go-Go Carting
Use the carts' tight handling to cut every corner. Be careful of pedestrians and dumpsters in alleyways.

San Fierro Fastlane
Try to get a lead early by passing the competition on the pavement. There's two downhill sections, be careful at the end of the second that you don't over shoot the turning.

Don't shoot other drivers - it just ain't allowed.

San Fierro Hills
Look at the icons on the radar. If they're pointing up, they're above you, so watch out for the time the race switches to the freeway.

County Endurance
You're driving a Bullet, so you have the speed. As the race is so long you can pick up a lot damage – concentrate and take care.

LAS VENTURA - AIRPORT FREIGHT DEPOT

San Fierro to Las Ventura
Use the hard shoulders to avoid the majority of the traffic.

Dam Rider
The key to this race is handing the sharp corners at Regular Tom, in and just after Fort Carson and onto the road approaching the dam.

Desert Tricks
Again there's key corners to approach with caution. Watch for opportunity to cut corners in the desert.

Las Ventura Ringroad
Use the hard shoulder to pass the traffic, but be careful of traffic joining the freeway from the right.

LAS VENTURA - AIRPORT

Air Challenges
These are tests of you flying skill. When in the planes remember to put your landing gear up, use the rudders for gentle turning and keep the dramatic banking to a minimum. Also if it catches fire – don't bail out, as they may go out. Then again…

World War Aces
Be prepared to roll your plane 90° to scrape through narrow gaps.

Barnstorming
The stunt plane is sensitive, and remember, you have to accelerate to climb in altitude.

Military Services
For the coronas put the Hyrda Jets jets down (with the right analogue stick) and use it like a helicopter, then put the jets up to speed to the next marker. Press ◎ to release chaff if you get any trouble near Area 69. There's 60 checkpoints so be prepared for the long haul.

Chopper Checkpoint
This is in the Maverick, it's quite simple but be careful of lampposts and traffic lights when in the city.

Whirly Bird Waypoint
There's many checkpoints in tough places to reach. Don't rush and remember that helicopters. Drop down on some coronas.

QUARRY MISSIONS

Located in the Explosive Situation mission.

Mission One
Locate seven rocks and push them off the trail. Keep the bulldozer's loader down and take it easy when pushing the rocks off the ledges. Don't send the dozer over with them.

Mission Two
You must push four barrels into the red markers to disarm them. To save time descending the quarry, drive the over edges and the bottom heavy bulldozer should survive the fall and right itself.

Mission Three
You have to perform a drive-by on a dumper truck, while in a dumper truck so make sure you have a decent sub-machine gun. The truck is tricky to handle so wait for a straight road to pull along side to attack. Or try the P.I.T. move you learn in driving school.

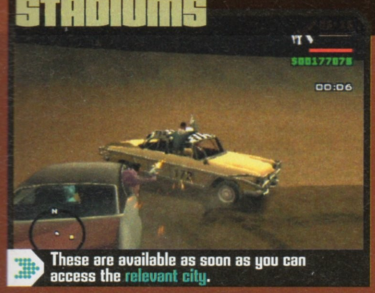
Mission Four
There's some bodies that need dumping before cops comes, so first get to the dump truck. Driving the truck to the body dumping spot is the tricky bit, as the ground is so uneven. You can reverse up slopes to prevent the bodies falling out. Also use the first-person driving viewpoint to assess the driving surface. Use the right analogue stick to control the loader.

Mission Five
When taking the explosive barrels, carefully plan your route, then drive as effectively as you can. The first-person viewpoint helps you see the road ahead when handling a vehicle the size of the dump truck.

Mission Six
Don't try to push the barrels off individually, start at the southern most one and head north. As you pick up pace and collect more barrels, the momentum should send them safely clear of the track.

Mission Seven
You must clear a dead cop and his bike from the quarry. Use the Sanchez to jump right to the quarry bottom to get to the dozer, then shove each item into the red marker – do this separately. Back on the Sanchez to get to the crane to put the bodies in the dumper – use the shadows to help judge positioning. When driving the dumper, reversing up slopes prevents the contents falling out. To get to the water you have to cross the freeway – use R2 and L2 to make sure the path is relatively clear. Use the R1 handbrake when dumping the bodies so you don't slide in.

STADIUMS



These are available as soon as you can access the relevant city.

LOS SANTOS FORUM, EAST BEACH

8-Track

Finish first in the race. This is easy once you're in front, but it's tricky getting there, as there's little overtaking room. You could try to spin the opposition off course by nudging the back fender or drive cautiously and hope the mad AI drivers crash.

FOSTER VALLEY STADIUM, SOUTH SAN FIERRO

Blood Bowl

The San Fierro stadium is in the south of the city

You must drive through the checkpoints to keep the clock topped up while keeping your car intact by driving over the spanner pickups. The trick here is to continually do laps of the bowl on the sloped sides, this way you keep out the scrap in the middle and the constant momentum helps you reach the checkpoints in front of you. Doing drive-by's helps, too.

DIRTRING STADIUM, BLACKFIELD LAS VENTURAS

Dirt Track

You need a Bike Skill of at least 50%, and this can only be entered into on Mondays and Wednesdays. Press L1 to see what day it is. Being patient helps in this race, as many AI riders are far too aggressive and fall off. There's six laps so aim to make steady progress to the front, using the R1 brake for the corners.

Use one piece of apparatus at a time.

Kickstart

You need a Bike Skill of at least 50% and this can be entered into on any day except Mondays and Wednesdays. You need to earn 26 points and you get one point for green coronas, two for amber ones and three for reds. It's simply as case of practicing on each bit of apparatus and working methodically through the stadium.

SCHOOLS

Once you've completed the 'School' sections you can tackle the Steal Cars missions.

You have to pass Pilot School in the plot missions but there's also a Driving, Bike and Boat school, where you can be awarded medals and unlock vehicles. Always watch the videos and try to copy the approaches and brake timings.

DRIVING SCHOOL

Unlocked after the Deconstruction Mission. Situated south of CJ's garage in San Fierro.

- Get all Bronze to get a Super GT
- Get all Silver to get a Bullet
- Get all Gold to get a Hotknife

BIKE SCHOOL

Unlocked after completing Pilot School. Situated in Blackfield, Las Venturas.

- Get all Bronze to get a Freeway
- Get all Silver to get a FCR-900
- Get all Gold to get a NRG-500

BOAT SCHOOL

Unlocked after completing Pier 69. Situated in Bayside Marina, Tierra Robada.

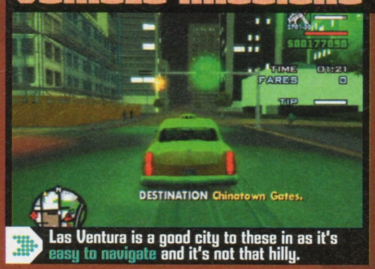
- Get all Bronze to get a Marquis
- Get all Silver to get a Squallo
- Get all Gold to get a Jetmax

PROPERTIES

Guns and clothes might look cool but invest in property to really coin in the cash. Thanks Mum.

You have to purchase every property in the game to get towards that 100%. They're highlighted on the map by the green house icon – you can't miss them. Your next step is to get money and go buy them! Completing the Asset missions, and then regularly going to pick up the profits, is the best way to keep your dollars topped up.

VEHICLE MISSIONS



Las Ventura is a good city to these in as it's easy to navigate and it's not that hilly.

All these missions are activated by pressing R3 once inside the appropriate vehicle. Remember, using sirens can help clear traffic from your path, and it's best to pick a city you know really well to do the missions in.

BURGLARY

To do this mission you need a black Boxville van – there's one located by the flats opposite the Los Santos gym. Then press R3 between 22.00 and 06.00. Next you must find a suitable house, these will have yellow entrance icon by the doors – you'll have to get close to see them, so you may have to go on foot. Sneak into the house and once you've found something to nick (TVs, stereos etc.) you have 10 seconds to leave the house before the occupants are roused. Then, once outside, you have 10 seconds to get it into the van before someone calls the police. You must then get the booty into the lock-up (the yellow blip on the radar) before 06.00. You'll complete mission once you've nicked $10,000 worth of stuff.

Find a system that works and keep using it.

FIREFIGHTER

There's 12 levels to complete, and the reward is becoming fire proof. Simply put out the fires with the water cannon. Get close to the fire as possible – the truck won't catch fire. Try not to damage the truck too much, as this is a long mission.

VALET PARKING MISSIONS

Located at the Vank Hoff Hotel, San Fierro. First you must change into the valet outfit at a safe house. There's five levels of what is basically 'fast parking' to complete. Don't shoot the other valets, as you'll lose 20 seconds as a penalty. Stand on the island rather than next to the hotel doors so you can get into the left hand drive seat quickly. Perfect parking gives you bonus time, but don't concentrate too much, this is about speed.

VIGILANTE MISSIONS

There's 12 levels to complete, and the reward is body armour value going up to 150. Basically, you have to shoot down the criminals highlighted as red dots on the radar. You can recruit gang members to help you in this – useful for drive-bys. You can use any law enforcement vehicle including the Hunter helicopter. (Get all golds in pilots school). You can't repair your car, but you can continue the mission by nicking another police vehicle.

The cop bikes make finding targets simple.

PIMPING

Find a Broadway vehicle and press R3. Jizzy had one and there should be one parked at Madd Dogg's mansion. There's 10 levels to complete, and it's case of dropping off and picking up two girls between various jobs – as soon as one girl is dropped off, the other needs picking up and so on. Be prepared with a decent weapon, as some customers can get violent. The reward is that when you entertain call girls, they'll pay you for pleasure.

PARAMEDIC

There's 12 levels to complete the reward is getting a new health value of 150. Just collect the patients and take them to the hospital. Clever route planning is the key for the later levels.

Put that siren on. It helps clear the way.

TAXI DRIVER

You have to complete 50 fares and the reward is Nitro on all taxis. As you have to drive for a long time, it's worth knowing that you can get a battered cab fixed up at a Pay'n'Spray.

TRUCKING MISSIONS

Available once you've complete Catalina's Tank Commander mission. Located at the RS Haul in Flint County. There's eight missions to complete. The key to each mission is planning the easiest and most direct route to you destination. Use the map cursor to highlight key junctions so you know where you should be heading. In some missions you'll have a wanted level, so keep moving. The tanker can usually smash the police cars, but if you stop they can drag you from the cabin.

If you jacknife you can re-attach the cabin.

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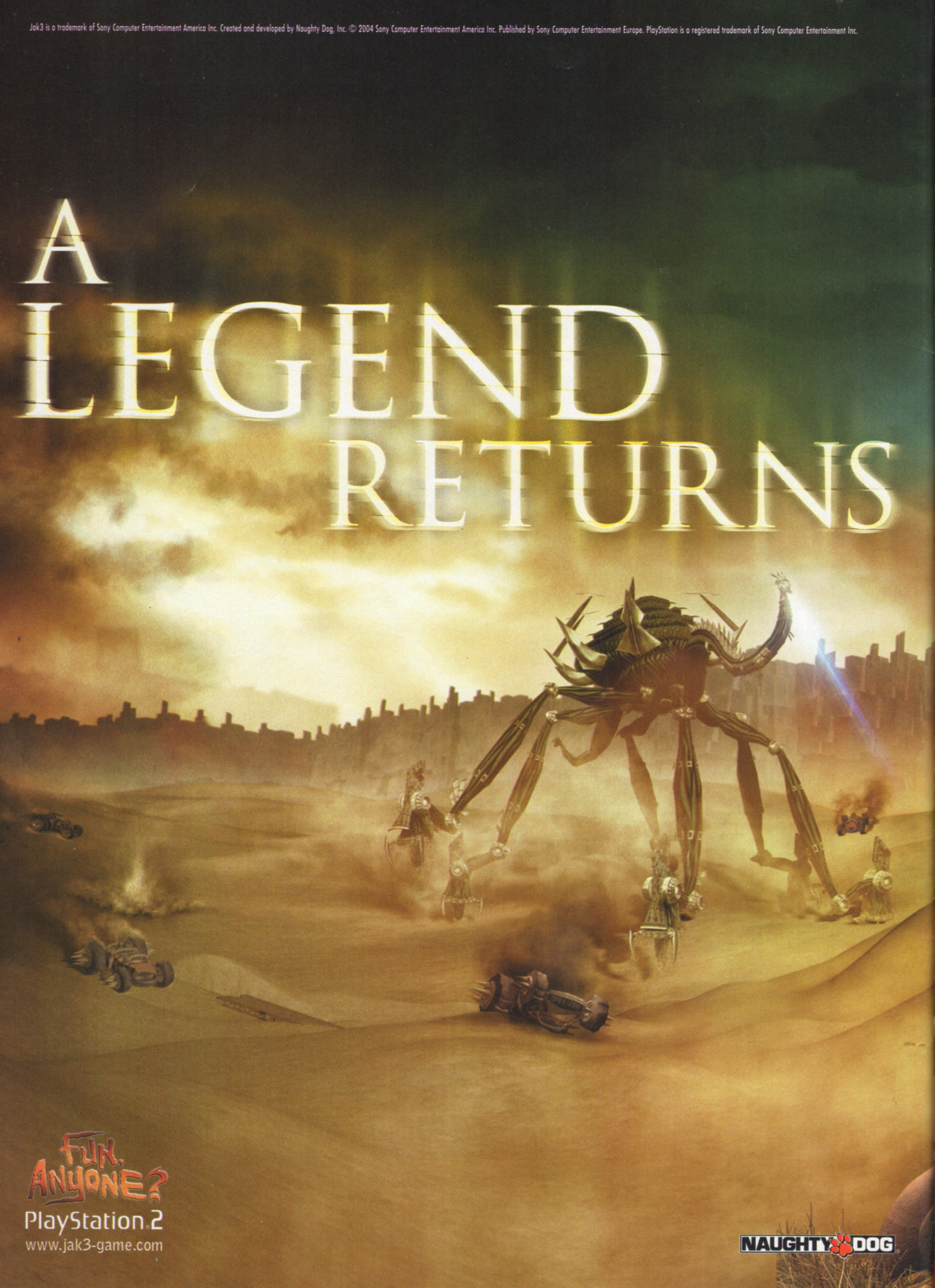

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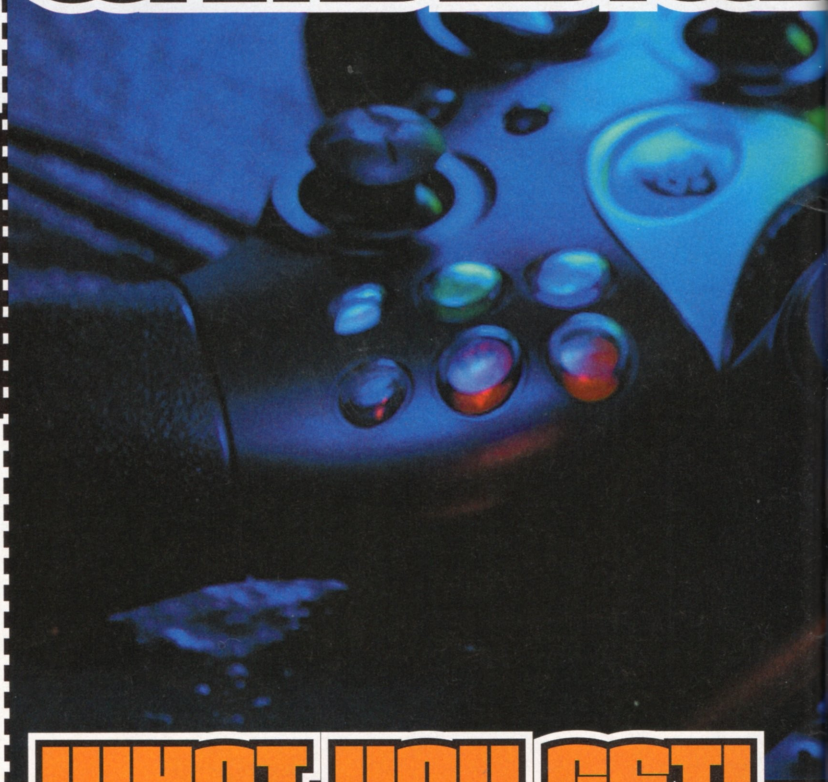

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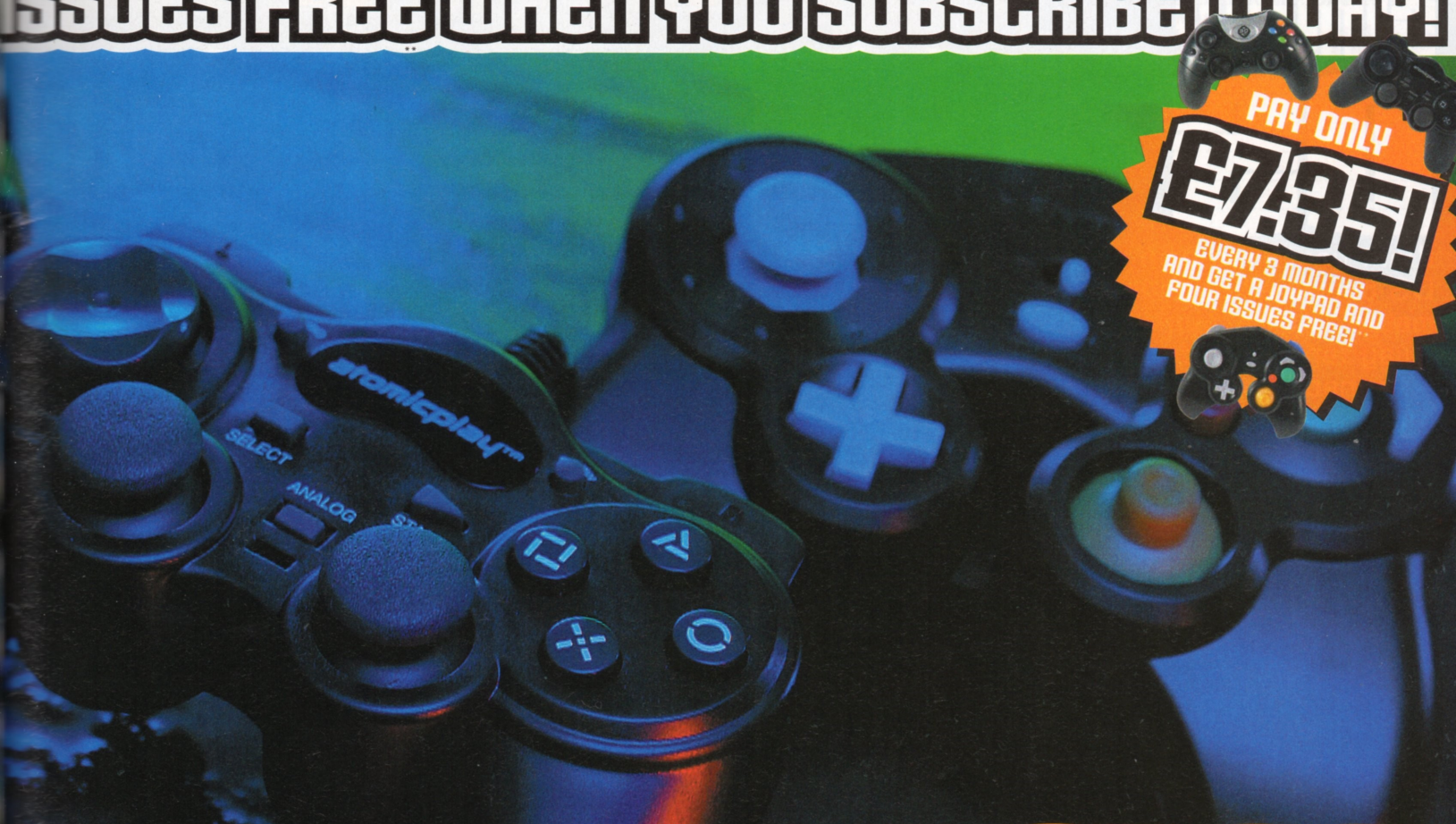

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Which of these is a real lady wrestler?

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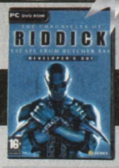

Chronicles of Riddick is the prequel to which film?

A) PITCH BLACK
B) SMOKEY GREY
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WIN! METAL SLUG

In the game, what is a *Metal Slug*?

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In *Jungle Beat*, you control Donkey Kong by doing what?

- ☐ a) Banging a set of bongos
- ☐ b) Singing
- ☐ c) Waving your arms around

RUMBLE ROSES

Which of these is a real lady wrestler?

☐ a) Chyna ☐ b) Hong Kong ☐ c) Korea

MEN OF VALOR: THE VIETNAM WAR

In which decade did the Vietnam war take place?

☐ a) '50s ☐ b) '60s ☐ c) '70s

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Chronicles of Riddick is the prequel to which film?

- ☐ a) Pitch Black
- ☐ b) Smokey Grey
- ☐ c) Icy White

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- ☐ a) A big gun
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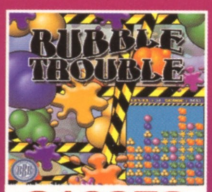

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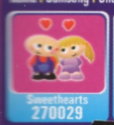
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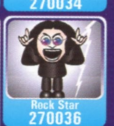
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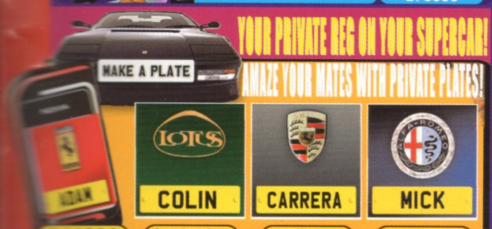

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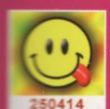
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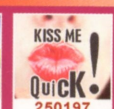

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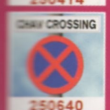

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